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PROFESSOR J. S. WILL











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# THE CHURCH AND THE FUTURE

“The removal of those things which are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.”—HEB. XII. 27.

“An possibile est Christum non esse inter tot ac tantos Christianos? Si autem Christus ibi est et Christiani, cum Christo et Christianis standum est in quacunque re quæ contra Dei præceptum non fuerit.”

# THE CHURCH AND THE FUTURE

BY

GEORGE TYRRELL

AUTHOR OF "CHRISTIANITY AT THE CROSS ROADS"  
AND OTHER WORKS

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## INTRODUCTION

"IN my own inward history this book ends a painful process of necessary readjustment, and I feel as one who, after much uncertainty, has at last chosen a path that is clear, however difficult and uninviting in many ways."

Thus Father Tyrrell wrote to a friend on June 27th, 1903, in regard to *The Church and the Future*, which he had printed privately under the pseudonym Hilaire Bourdon, and which was being circulated with great reserve and discretion. There was, during his literary career, a short period during which it was necessary that his advice to those in need should be anonymous or pseudonymous.

The reason for this course of action was, as his friends knew, that he was, at that time, deliberately attempting to accommodate his life to a position which was becoming daily more strained and difficult. So long as he remained in the Society of Jesus, he was bound to have regard for the feelings, traditions and official welfare of the order: but, on the other hand, he was pressed by another and conflicting class of obligations towards those amongst whom his true lot was cast, to whom his service was still more imperatively owing—I speak of those who had turned to him, as they could turn to no other, in their spiritual necessities; of those who had been sent to him, in many instances, by his ecclesiastical superiors; and who now demanded that they should not be abandoned in the middle of the stream, because others, sitting

comfortably on the bank, disapproved of the make of rope which he was throwing to them.

To give some idea of the difficulties of this kind with which he was beset I quote from a letter he wrote me in the November of 1901, after a few days spent in London.

"I *could* not live in London," he said, "a famine-stricken city, and I a poor wretch with a false repute of bread in my pocket, and every one tearing after me for a bite. Perhaps in this wilderness one may learn at last to turn stones into bread, but till then I am better out of the way, unheard and unseen."

I hesitate to say that he was in a "false position," because the expression is too uncertain in its meaning. If a "false position" be one in which a man is bound to act falsely, then the words are certainly not applicable to Father Tyrrell's position any more than they were applicable to that of Newman at Littlemore; at that rate we should all have to act falsely so soon as we perceived truths which we were not yet prepared to utter. If, on the contrary, the words only signify that, in certain complicated situations, it is extremely difficult to avoid some appearance of falseness, then we may admit the description, while justifying the state it denotes.

We shall be told that the "plain man," "the man in the street" (who is often credited with coarser perceptions than he really owns) cannot understand such subtleties; if you have lost faith in a position it is time to leave it; Father Tyrrell, it will be said, had two honest alternatives before him, to leave the Jesuits or to keep silence, whereas he did neither.

Well, either of those alternatives would have been, I know for certain, more agreeable to Father Tyrrell himself than that which he actually took. But, unfortunately, escape was not so easy as it was

thus made out, for the simple reason that he had to think of others as well as, and more than, himself. His silence and retirement would have been matter of distress and dismay to those who were looking to him for light in the crisis through which religion was passing ; while his exit from the order was doomed to be, he knew only too well, matter of infinite pain and sorrow and trouble to a large class of friends most dear to him, whose permanent home was in the old traditional school. All this, not even to mention the severe technical complications which would result from his severance from the Society ; complications which were eventually worked against him even more disastrously than he anticipated.

The result was a compromise—not altogether satisfactory, as is the nature of compromises, but the best he could work out at the time.

“When I saw Father Provincial at his visitation,” he wrote from Richmond in September 1901, “I told him frankly that I did not believe one scrap in the existing Jesuits as a body ; that my connection was purely external and political in order to avoid scandal ; that I would keep quiet as long as I was allowed *reasonable* liberty in writing,” etc.

In the name of reasonable liberty he claimed to himself the rights of an individual to express his mind, while, at the same time, inflicting no injury on the body to which he belonged ; injury, that is to say, which they, not he, would regard as such ; viz., the loss of official and orthodox esteem entailed by the breaking with old-established traditions.

Now, one claim his friends have a right to make, and this is that he did succeed, wholly, in this latter object ; that, through him, the Society of Jesus incurred not the least shadow of a suspicion of heterodoxy, but was rather confirmed in her reputation for the contrary ;

that he drew the storms on to his own head and not the heads of those to whom he was nominally attached. Have any a right to ask more than this ?

Only in one respect we may say—as he certainly felt—that he failed ; an inevitable failure but a sorrowful one. It is the personal friends who are, in such cases, destined to suffer, and, undoubtedly, some of his S.J. friends did suffer. The fact was that some of them knew his mind in part, and steadily defended him in part ; these were dismayed, later, by finding how much there was which they did *not* know, and were pained, almost fooled, by the discovery. It was hard, and yet again one scarcely sees how it was to be avoided. He certainly did not seek their championship, and, indeed, diligently avoided many friends to escape this trouble for them and himself. But the storm could not strike him without, in some measure, striking those who clung to him in spite of himself.

So much to introduce a work for the first time publicly under his own name. He had thought of bringing it out eventually in a fuller form ; but some will not be sorry to have it in its original brevity and conciseness. In two places slight alterations have been made in accordance with his own intentions.

M. D. PETRE.



## PART I

### CATHOLICISM AS OFFICIALLY STATED

OR

### THE THEORY OF ECCLESIASTICAL INERRANCY

THIS controversy is one between what I shall call "official" and "liberal" Catholicism: between the theology of those who are at present in the seat of Moses, and who can impose their interpretation of Catholicism upon others as the solely orthodox; and the theology of those who are at present in a feeble minority, but who claim to be no less, if not more, orthodox in holding to a wider interpretation than the "official"—meaning by "wider," more in harmony with newer acquisitions of knowledge and newer modes of thought. It is common to both "official" Catholics and to unbelievers, who, as hostile to Catholicism, wish to show its incompatibility with modern thought, to maintain that liberal Catholicism is dishonest; that it is a compromise on the part of those who, for good motives or bad, desire to keep in communion with the Church while disallowing her principal claim.

Here and there, some official, a little sharper than others of his kind, sees more clearly the logical implications of the liberalism of the critical school; he sees that there is really no *via media* between an acceptance of the "official" doctrine of ecclesiastical inerrancy

with all its consequences, and a radical re-interpretation of that doctrine. The "officials" as a class are too wanting in any sort of adequate first-hand, or even second-hand, information, as to the dimensions—the depth, the width, the bulk—of the collective difficulty of their position to shrink from asserting it with a boldness commensurate to their ignorance of the danger. The critic, I take it, is as keenly conscious as they that a dilemma has to be faced; but aware of impossibilities of the "official" theory of inerrancy and its consequences, and *also* of the danger and scandal of an abrupt and public abandonment of that position, he is, I suppose, anxious to avoid that premature formulation of the dilemma which zealous reactionaries conceive to be so opportune. He would wish the narrower view to fall quietly into disuse and oblivion, and the wider to be slipped noiselessly into its place.

As to the alleged dishonesty of the liberal position, I think it should be noticed that, just the one dogmatic point which a Catholic may dispute without *logical* suicide is the rule of faith, the limits and nature of ecclesiastical inerrancy. Having accepted the rule in any form, he is bound under pain of self-contradiction to accept all that comes under that rule. To deny *every* sort of ecclesiastical inerrancy is, I think, to give up Catholicism, which is distinguished from Protestantism in holding that the united body of the faithful is the organ of the development of Christian truth, and that isolated inquiry has no divine guarantee. If the liberal Catholic professed to accept the "official" doctrine of inerrancy and yet questioned its consequences, he would have no place in the Church; but that the officials *say* he has none, does not prove that he has none, except to themselves. He, however, from the nature of his contention, cannot retort their excommunication, since their rule of orthodoxy includes

his and goes beyond it ; though his does not include theirs. Further, since they are *de facto* in office he must within due limits allow their authority, though not to the full extent that they claim.

Hence the dispute between liberals and officials is as to the limits, not as to the *fact*, of ecclesiastical inerrancy. Notice, that among the officials themselves there is much dispute as to the limits of that kind of inerrancy about which they are all agreed against the liberals ; *e.g.*, some will say that the Bull on Anglican orders, or that the canonisation of a saint is infallible ; others will deny it. The controversy in the English Catholic *Weekly Register* over Lord Halifax's article (*Nineteenth Century*, May 1901) shows how little, or how much, can be brought under the rule of Papal infallibility. Hence, a Catholic may always dispute the *limits*, so long as he believes in the *fact*, of the Church's inerrancy, and can point to some rule which he stands by in all its consequences.

I cannot see, however, what is sometimes contended, that a rule can reflect upon itself and modify or extend its own limits. If, *e.g.*, I accept the inerrancy of general councils, it is in all matters, *except* as to the fact and limits of their own inerrancy which must be *pre-supposed* : it is because I believe they represent "the mind of the Church," whose inerrancy again I believe, not on the authority of the Church or from the *consensus fidelium*, but for those *reasons* of heart and head which compel my assent. Strive how we will, such an act of private judgment is at the root of all faith *in a rule* ; just as an act of free-will is pre-supposed in a vow of obedience. A man is a sincere Protestant, in the old sense, who rejects the living Church and takes the Bible as his supreme guide in religion whether he believe in verbal inspiration or in the loosest sense of inspiration. To accept the Bible

instead of the Church makes him a Protestant; and he is this or that sort of Protestant according to the mode and limits that he allows to its inspiration. A precisely similar "preambulatory" act of private judgment is logically implied in the Catholic position. Nor again is the subsequent private judgment which the Protestant exercises in interpreting his rule of faith (the Bible) different from that which the extreme "official" Catholic exercises over the most recent Papal utterances, which, like the Bible, will have their ambiguities and disputable points.

The essential difference is not in the exercise of private judgment whether prior or subsequent to the acceptance of the authoritative rule of faith, but solely as to the *nature* of that rule: in the one case, it is the mind of the living Church; in the other, it is the record of a particular phase of that mind. The "divisions of Protestants" are due, not to the legitimate exercises of private judgment in interpreting their rule of faith, but to the greater indeterminateness of that rule; they are different in number and kind from the divisions of Catholics, but they are not *per se* inconsistent with a rule of faith and with a certain unity of theological belief. A more definite rule secures greater unity; no rule could secure that perfect and fatal unity, which by excluding variations would put an end to doctrinal evolution and life.

Hence the liberal Catholic is in no way a Protestant because he exercises his private judgment as to the limits of the Church's inerrancy, and as to the interpretation of her mind; for the "official" Catholic does just the same.

The controversy between liberal and official, whatever minor differences may divide the two causes, concerns the *limits* of the Church's inerrancy—the fact is assumed by both.



It is not to my purpose here to sum up all the difficulties that have of late years been so rapidly accumulating against the "official" doctrine of inerrancy—both *directly* against the doctrine itself, and *indirectly* against other doctrinal consequences that flow from it. That will form matter for another undertaking. Suffice it here to say that in the main they are not, as the officials (owing to their exclusively clerical and scholastic education and to their seclusion from the general education of the day) seem to suppose, purely philosophic or scientific; still less are they drawn from the philosophy of the eighteenth and the science of the early nineteenth century; but are almost entirely of a positive and historical character. It is not, as they imagine, with Voltaire and the Encyclopædists, nor with Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer and the other "absurdi" of scholastic manuals; nor even with such bogeys as Huxley and Spencer, that we have to deal; but with the scripture critics, and the ecclesiastic historians, and the students of comparative religion; with Gunkel and Holtzmann, and Weiss and Harnack, and Sohm and Weizäker; and with many Catholic workers on the same lines—with science, no doubt, in a sense; but with a science based on, and shaped into agreement with, facts; and therefore primarily with facts. Between theory and theory the battle is endless; but no theory can stand out against adverse facts—not even the strongest faith. "Tandem aliquando," albeit so late as 1826, the vanquished Churchmen had to cry out: "Galileo vicisti!" (sic); and so it will be sooner or later as to all well-established facts irreconcilable with official Catholicism;—ignored or denied as long as possible; then perverted and distorted; at last they must be admitted, thanks not to the candour of the officials, but to the inevitable advance of the tide of general information.

Not to speak at once of those difficulties furnished by the comparative study of religion, which bear upon the relation of Christianity to other religions, the results of Scripture criticism and of the history of the development of Catholic dogmas and institutions create a cumulative argument against the official explanation of Catholicism, whose force increases in steady proportion to the width and depth of our investigations. No man who has any first-hand acquaintance with such investigations can hope that the abortive fencings and parryings of theological dialectics can keep out the tide, that is advancing to sweep down every building that is not founded on the solid rock of fact. Difficulties against a position are not doubts; but there comes a moment when they turn the scale and give birth to doubt and denial. Faith in the faith of others can carry us a long way, but when we find that their faith is as second-hand as our own, and that there is no one whose faith is original and independent, we remember the story of the Emperor's invisible clothes, and begin to trust the evidence of our own senses.

To begin with the *Scripture* difficulty and its bearings on the "official" conception of the Church's inerrancy.

Here we are not considering the Bible as a part of the documentary evidence for the history of dogmatic development, but simply the question of its inspiration. I cannot but think that the official is quite right in his contention that the liberal theory of inspiration is *as a whole* absolutely irreconcilable with the Encyclical "Providentissimus," with the whole teaching of Franzelin of which that Encyclical is a condensation; with the teaching of the Vatican, Tridentine and other councils of which Franzelin is a substantially faithful expositor; with the morally unanimous teaching of



the Fathers to which those councils give only a slightly developed expression. It is mere dialectical trifling to pretend that the views of Gunkel, Jülicher, Weiss, and Holtzmann, which it embodies in only a slightly modified form, are not substantially incompatible with the official doctrine of scriptural inspiration. On the other hand it is no less clear that, in the gross, the results of criticism must be, and will be, accepted ; and that the inspiration of Scripture can only be maintained, if at all, in some greatly modified sense.

If this be allowed (were it only for the sake of argument) it implies in general a denial of the "official" theory as to the range of the Church's inerrancy. The theological schools, the popes, the councils, the fathers have been mistaken ; and this not merely in a detail of doctrine, but as to what might be called a secondary "rule of faith." *Semper ubique ab omnibus*, till quite recently the faithful have been taught and have accepted the view that the Bible is a miraculous book, dictated by the Holy Ghost ; free from error in all its original parts. To square this view with criticism would need an amount of juggling with words past even the power of a theologian.

It is not then only, or chiefly, as an instance *in contra*, as a case where according to the official theory the Church has *de facto* erred, that the Bible difficulty is fatal to this same official theory of her inerrancy. Its indirect consequences are much more serious. For the doctrine of ecclesiastical, and of course of papal inerrancy, is based on the teaching of fathers and councils and of the Scriptures themselves.

As to the fathers and councils : whatever they have said about the inerrancy of the Church is as nothing to what they have said concerning the inspired authority of the Sacred Scriptures, which moreover they use and apply for the most part as verbally inspired. If their

doctrine as to the Scriptures has to be rejected or largely modified, *a fortiori* will their doctrine as to the Church. And indeed the modifications which liberal Catholics demand in both cases are not only analogous, but dependent.

But for the most part what fathers and councils and theologians have taught as to the Church's inerrancy has been avowedly based upon certain texts in the New Testament (*vide* the current theological treatises *De Ecclesia*). To prove the Church's inerrancy from Scripture we cannot begin by assuming the Church's doctrine as to the inspiration of the New Testament. We must treat the New Testament as a mere document subject to the ordinary laws of criticism. Unconsciously, no doubt, the Catholic apologist is influenced by his belief in the inspiration of that document and deals with it as with a faultless record of divine oracles, and not as with a very fallible report of *primâ facie* incredible events. As an apologist, however, he is bound to stand on the same platform as those unbelieving critics whom he wants to convince; and he may not therefore adduce any texts which are considered open to reasonable doubt, whether as to their authenticity or their meaning. Arguing with Protestants of the precritical period (*i.e.* up to the middle of the nineteenth century) he might assume, if not the inspiration, at least the substantial authenticity of all the parts of the New Testament as held by the Fathers of the Church; he could appeal to "*Tu es Petrus*," etc., and to "*Pasce oves meas*," and to "*Tu aliquando conversus*," etc., and could squeeze each word of these texts as though it had been uttered by the Holy Ghost after an eternity of careful premeditation, and with an eye to every possible sense that might be extracted from it. But now criticism suspects many of these texts (especially those from St Matthew) to be inter-

polations in the interests of the early ambitions of Rome ; or to be the reporters' vision, or perversion, of Christ's words rather than the words themselves ; or to be mere fabricated (though characteristic) utterances put into His mouth, after the literary custom of those times. At most they are thought to possess a vague collective (or cumulative) value, altogether inadequate to the purpose of the apologist *pro ecclesia infallibili* ; and it is only by assuming the inerrancy of the "official" doctrine as to their inspiration that they can be made to bear the burden laid upon them.

It is, however, not only in these three ways [*i.e.* (1) As apparently contradicting a doctrine which the Church has taught, *sc.* : the official doctrine of inspiration ; (2) As weakening *a fortiori* the value of what councils and fathers and (3) Scriptures have said of the Church's inerrancy] that the breakdown of the official doctrine of biblical inspiration would be so fatal to the extreme view of ecclesiastical authority. Not only the doctrine *De Ecclesia*, but other doctrines no less vital rest largely on the Scriptures. We must be able to prove from the Bible, to the satisfaction of the reasonable but unbelieving critic, that Christ was, if not God (for this may be held over to theology proper, and left aside in the apologetic preambles), at least an inspired and infallible prophet of God, whose doctrine is infallibly preserved in the Catholic Church. We all know how miracles and prophecies are considered by the "official" school (relying on words of the Vatican Council) to be the staple of this proof. We also know that after the philosophical difficulties against the possibility, the discernibility and the proving-value of miracles and prophecies have been settled, it remains to establish the fact that miracles have occurred in due conditions, and that prophecies have been made and fulfilled. Now Old Testament

criticism has robbed prophecies, New Testament criticism has robbed miracles, of nearly all their apologetic value. For apologetic purposes we must take the Bible as it is estimated by those whom we would convince, if we are to have a common basis of argument. But the *consensus* of current criticism of even the more moderate sort makes the Bible an insufficient basis for the scientific establishment of a single indisputable miracle or of a single clear fulfilment of prophecy. As to the latter, the official apologists themselves have, even in precritical times, been reduced to sore straits to determine the sense of the prediction and the form of its fulfilment; but criticism has increased these difficulties a hundred-fold, especially by the *a priori* probable hypothesis, supported with some array of *a posteriori* evidence, that the New Testament has been both consciously and unconsciously doctored into an agreement with prophecy so as to bring home to the Jews an *ad hominem* argument for Christ's Messiahship.

All this is a distinct difficulty from that which is suggested by the study of prophecy in the light of the philosophy and history of religion in general. In the higher sense, as opposed to soothsaying, prophetic prediction is hard to distinguish from the purely natural intuitions of religious genius. As mere soothsaying it has its parallels in all ancient religions, and seems to admit of natural explanations which account either for the seemingly wonderful facts or for the belief that such facts have occurred.

The cocksure Philistine denial of the possibility of miracles has gone out of intellectual fashion together with the grosser forms of materialistic philosophy. As an effect without a cause; as against nature in the widest sense; as a divine *dérailson* and contempt of law and order, of course a miracle is impossible. It



must always have a cause and be in the order of nature, even though, like the visit of a comet whose year is a million of our years, it be an occurrence unique in the brief day of human history. But a comet is not a miracle. A miracle implies a setting aside of the ordinary cause and the substitution of another by an intervention of the First Cause. Even in this sense no man will dogmatically deny the possibility, he will only question the fact; he will ask: Did this strange thing really happen? Was it manifestly a departure from the established course of nature due to a special intervention of its First Cause?

Now criticism has reasonably asked these two questions concerning the miracles of the Gospel, to which the "official" apologist trusts in order to establish the divine authority of Christ's utterances.

Experimental psychology and "comparative thaumatology" (to adopt a convenient term) make it more evident daily that many of the strange phenomena in question are, though rare, yet regular and natural in similar conditions. Intense and abnormal (whether supernormal or sub-normal) workings of the human spirit are frequently attended by bodily manifestations of a parallel strangeness, whether dependent directly on the spirit so affected or on other spirits dominated by its influence. The phenomena of hysteria, as studied by Pierre Janet, Charcot, etc., reveal a realm of nature whose laws are only beginning to be understood, but to which it is plain that nine-tenths of our so-called miracles may very well belong. It is, however, not only the sub-normal but also the supernormal states of the spirit that are characterised by these manifestations; and we might well say of Christ and of other beneficent "faith-healers": "No man can do the works which thou doest unless God be with him." But miracles of this sort would hardly satisfy the

demands of the official apologist. They might testify to great sanctity, and to a high measure of the prophetic spirit; but they are not such as evidently involve a setting aside of the established laws of nature by a special intervention of the First Cause.

There are other gospel miracles, like the multiplication of bread and the stilling of the storm, which it is impossible to treat in this fashion or to reduce to any hitherto observed class of natural phenomena; and here criticism asks very reasonably: Did these wonders occur?

The hypothesis of deliberate fabrication with the intent to deceive on the part of the Evangelist is rightly excluded by sane criticism; the ring of sincerity is not so hard to detect that we need hesitate to place the canonical and most of the apocryphal gospels in quite distinct categories—these latter appealing manifestly to the mere wonder-lust of their readers. But there are other hypotheses, reconcilable with the veracity of the Evangelists, which must be excluded before we take their word as a guarantee for the facts.

In those prescientific days a “miracle” was in no way an incredible event, nor in anywise so remarkable as it would be now. It was taken for granted that every man who claimed a divine mission would manifest the presence of the Spirit by a display of thaumaturgy. The fact was not antecedently improbable, and was therefore more readily believed—just as now in Catholic countries miracles are reported every other day and are believed with little questioning. The uneducated in our day are as incapable as ever of accurate observation and description; events of a strange kind are exaggerated in the telling no less than formerly; statements are as easily misunderstood; memory is as liable to omit some uninteresting but critical detail—but when the event passes from the



category of the strange to that of the miraculous, the limits of ordinary credibility are reached and testimony is suspected and examined. This was not so in the days when our gospels were written, "when the supernatural was quite natural." Again, literary conventions were altogether different, as the critic so often insists. As it was not thought unfair to invent characteristic speeches for a hero, so neither to fabricate characteristic deeds. Their truth was to be sought in their correspondence to the character which they were designed to reveal. We do not ask if Socrates really said what Plato puts into his mouth; but we may rationally ask: "Is Plato's Socrates the true Socrates?" Similarly we may not perhaps be justified in asking: "Did Christ do or say all that the Fourth Gospel ascribes to Him?" but only in asking: "Is the Johannine Christ the true Christ—a true resetting and idealisation of Christ?"

We must face the possible supposition that as Christ, being undoubtedly a "faith-healer," had the repute of being a wonder-worker like other prophets, the Evangelists (or their sources), without any pretence to factual accuracy, or any suspicion of being taken *ad literam*, ascribed illustrative miracles to Him, or selected without discussion such as were popularly reported and seemed more in harmony with His doctrine and spirit. This is practically what has happened even with the earliest biographies of many a saint.

In some cases a nucleus of fact may have quickly grown like a snowball into a prodigy; in others, words meant metaphorically may have been taken literally, and parables confounded with events. What confirms these doubts is the few recorded utterances of Christ with regard to miracles<sup>1</sup>—utterances most unlikely to

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xii. 39; John iv. 48; Luke x. 20; xvi. 31.

have crept into the text by the interpolation of His followers, whose bias was so evidently towards the miraculous. That He Himself recognised and disapproved this bias is beyond doubt; though it is equally plain that He claimed to work miracles of healing and exorcism.

Finally, the comparative history of religions makes it reasonable to suspect that *the belief* in the strictly supernatural miracles of Christ may be explained otherwise than by the truth of the alleged fact, and according to the laws that govern the working of the human mind in analogous conditions. In these and kindred ways, New Testament criticism has weakened the bases of that "official" argument which reasons from the miracles of the Gospel to the infallibility of Christ's witness to Himself and to His doctrine. It is not necessary to *allow* these positions of the Old Testament or the New Testament critics in order to show the insufficiency of the "official" apologetic; it is enough to recognise that they obtain currency every day among those to whom that apologetic is addressed. As far as prophecies or miracles can be plausibly explained away, we cannot assume their existence as a certain basis of argument. As a fact the "official" apologist is biassed by his theological view of the Scriptures, and does not see that he must take them at their present scientific and public valuation or else set about changing that public valuation. His personal valuation, be it never so true, is not to the point.

But it is not only as to the infallibility of Christ's doctrine (as sealed by prophet and miracle), but as to its content that the apologetic value of Scripture has been weakened. We can no longer (apart from theological teachings about inspiration) assume in argument that we possess the *ipsissima verba* of Christ as to His own divinity, or as to any other doctrine or institution

for which they have been hitherto adduced. Least of all can we treat them by that method of verbal and logical analysis heretofore in vogue. If Jülicher is even approximately right, as is hard not to allow, then the real Christ vanishes into the background, and the gospels give us only a somewhat blurred shadow of His personality and teaching; as the Socrates of Plato is but a creation of the mind of Plato as influenced by Socrates, so what we see in the Gospels is a creation of the mind of the early Church as freshly influenced by Christ. We know Him as it were in combination; not in His purity. "Either God or an impostor" is a crude dilemma that might have had some plausibility when it was supposed that Christ said exactly all that the Gospel puts into His mouth. Now, it is apologetically valueless. "Messiah," "Son of Man," "Son of God," that these were His claims will however be denied by none. But even here the aforesaid dilemma is not cogent; we cannot argue any longer that Jesus was either the Messiah or an impostor, for this were to assume that illusion is out of the question on the score of the undisputed wisdom and sanctity of Christ. Yet it is now an admitted result of observation that similar illusions are consistent with the highest attainments in the way of wisdom and self-control; that the perfectly flawless mind pays for its immunity from illusion by a lack of inspiration and enthusiasm, and by a certain mediocrity of spiritual level; that the highly strung soul of the prophet is, in virtue of all that gives it its sway over the hearts of men, particularly prone to illusions concerning the origin and meaning of its own states, its relation to God and man, the significance and sovereign value of its message and mission. Hence criticism is quite reasonable in trying to explain the belief of Jesus in His own Christhood according to the natural working of psychological laws

in certain conditions; and this explanation must be rebutted before the apologist can prove anything from the fact that Christ *claimed* to be the Messiah. Again the contention of J. Weiss in his *Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes*, to the effect that the imminence of the Parousia was the dominant theme of Christ's teaching, and not merely a dispensable accessory, requires an extension of the *κένωσις* theory far beyond what official theology can possibly allow. If Jesus shared the contemporary illusion as to nearness of the event, what of His knowledge? If not, what of His sincerity? At least it proves that the substance of that *Predigt* is by no means so simply ascertainable as is assumed.

It is, however, throwing water on a drowned rat to go on multiplying examples of this kind in order to show that criticism makes the content of Christ's teaching as dubious as the evidence for its divine origin, in so far as it subjects the New Testament to the same scientific canons as are applied to similar documents, and prescinds carefully from the bias which has been created by the common belief of Christendom in its more or less miraculous inspiration.

No less are the difficulties raised against the official position by the historico-scientific investigations of the growth of Catholic dogmas and institutions. Newman's theory of development has never been cordially accepted by the "officials." Not only they, but, for different motives, many of their extremest opponents outside (and some inside) the Church regard the hypothesis as a sort of *deus ex machinâ*, invented by those who regard the Catholicism of to-day as something manifestly different from the religion of the Apostles and yet desire to reconcile this admission (which the "officials" disdain) with their fidelity to the Church. The only sort of development that the "officials" can really allow is a development of dis-



tinectness of analysis—such a literal “evolution” as the Council of Florence compares to the unfolding of a folded garment; all that is taught about dogmas and Sacraments and Church-polity in the Roman College to-day was, we are told, known to Peter and his successors, not merely in germ but in act. If at all “potentially” it was only with regard to greater actual distinctness. He who holds some *major* premiss can draw numberless conclusions from it if he be supplied with the *minor* premisses; but till so supplied he knows the conclusions only potentially. This is germinal knowledge, which is truly “developed” according as the *Minors* are gradually supplied. But if he holds all the *Minors*, as well as the *Major*, he knows the conclusions actually, though implicitly, without going outside his own mind. He has only to think; to put things together; to turn “confused” knowledge into distinct. This is the “official” notion of the *Depositum fidei*; all the *Majors* and *Minors* of modern Catholicism were revealed to St Peter and passed on to St Linus, who, had he been Socratically interrogated about any of the dogmas or Sacraments, would have answered in substantially the same way as a D.D. of the Gregorian University. We may call this the “explication,” as distinct from the “development,” of dogma.

Now in the light not merely of the contentions of Harnack, Sohm, Wernle, Hatch, Percy Gardner, and other non-Catholic investigators, but of the admissions of the few Catholics of the more liberal school, who have followed them timidly at a distance, it grows daily more evident that the “explication” theory is postposterously inadequate; that it can be shown step by step how the several dogmas and institutions have taken their present shape through the action of quite natural influences; how Christology has developed, and Trinitarianism, and Mariology, and the Sacramental



and hierarchical institutions ; above all, how Christianity was developed in the first two centuries from amorphous, undogmatic religion, more akin to early Methodism than to anything else, into something substantially identical with what is understood by Catholicism.

On Newman's principles it may possibly be contended that these were all perfectly legitimate "developments" of some one original principle or spirit, working upon and affected by its environment ; but it has become quite impossible to hold with the "officials" that the *Minors* as well as the *Majors* of our present *Conclusions* were known to the Apostolic Church, and to the revelation of Christ. The *Disciplina Arcani* and the "forty days" <sup>1</sup> can no longer bear the burden laid upon them. If, *e.g.*, the early popes knew their powers and did not reveal them or use them, they are answerable for more schisms than all the heresiarchs.

It is of course on the strength of this "explication" theory that "officials" are so opposed to anything that savours of a true "development," as distinct from a mere "explication" of existing doctrines, and that they are conservative, not so much of the laws of growth, as of what they fondly deem to be the original structure of Christianity. Undoubtedly the "liberals" are interested in proving past developments in order to justify present and future developments ; and indeed they are wise in so far as they see that the "explication" theory is historically untenable. On the other hand the "officials" are equally right in saying that the development theory was as strange to the Medieval West as it is to the Eastern Church of to-day ; that "novelty" was from very early times synonymous with "heresy" ; that Vincent of Lerins meant "explication" and nothing more, since the old-world

<sup>1</sup> Acts i. 3.

physiology conceived manhood as a mere "explication" of boyhood, and considered that a microscope could have detected the full-formed oak in the acorn; that, in short, the theory of development is itself a development which may be further developed, and must begin by proving itself Apostolic, at least in germ. And the Renans, inside and outside the Church, are equally anxious, for their own ends, to establish a view so destructive of existing Catholicism.

Such then, in rough outline, is the problem with which the "official" theory of the limits of the Church's inferrancy is confronted.

It may be well, just here, to remember what that official theory is. Christ and His Apostles are held to have delivered the complete "Depositum fidei" (i.e. the dogmas, Sacraments and other essential institutions of Catholicism as now existing) to St Linus and the episcopate united with him; who in turn have transmitted it infallibly to their successors, without substantial increment but only more fully "explicated," illustrated, systematised. As Christ stood outside, over, and above His disciples (as a shepherd over his flock, who is not himself a part of the flock) and as they were purely passive and receptive of His teaching and guidance, so it is maintained that the teaching Church (the pope and episcopate) is related to the Church taught. It is not the *whole* Church which is the adequate *Christi Vicarius* and *Pastor ovium*, but only a part of it. The organ of the Spirit is not the collective mind of both sections, which is gathered up, formulated and imposed by the episcopate; for this would be to make the episcopate only the organic head or principal member of the Church; it would be to make the whole Church, and not only the episcopate, the "*principium quod*" (e.g., I, who think, am the *principium quod* of my thinking; my mind, which

thinks, is the *principium quo* of my thinking) of ecclesiastical teaching, and the episcopate merely the “*principium quo*”; it would be to allow that the religious thought of the laity had an independent value as something more than a mere reflex and record of episcopal teaching; it would be to conceive the Church as being fundamentally (with a sort of logical priority) though not formally, a democracy—much as Suarez holds all forms of civil polity, however originating, to be democratic in their juridical root. So far historical criticism points to the conclusion that ecclesiastical polity has *de facto* developed from a loose federation of loosely organised communities, of a strongly democratic type, into the present highly centralised ecclesiastical empire in which all the teaching power has been vested in the pope, and practically taken away from the episcopate and the ecumenical council. No other development was perhaps logically possible as soon as the bishop came to be regarded as teaching, like a prophet or apostle, from his own mind in virtue of a supernatural charisma; and not merely as gathering up, formulating and, in virtue of his official authority, imposing on individuals the divinely guided mind of the whole community. The somewhat analogous relation of the pope to the universal community of bishops was bound to be interpreted in the same way; and from being merely the divinely appointed and assisted *principium quo* of their collective authority, whose function was to gather up, formulate and impose on individuals the mind of the collective episcopate and therefore of the whole clergy and laity, he became a sort of apostle or prophet, an external head, in regard to whose functions the Church is not co-operative (as is a body with its organic head, the two making but one *principium quod*) but passive and receptive. True, he does not claim to be, like prophet or apostle,

a fount of new revelation : but he does claim to hold and declare infallibly that *depositum fidei* whose adequate receptacle was formerly thought to be only the collective mind of the episcopate, if not of the whole clergy and laity : *l'Eglise c'est moi* expresses the whole tendency of this development, and exaggerates the achievements rather than the aspirations of the Vatican Council. To-day therefore Catholics are to look to Rome, not because Rome thinks what the *Orbis terrarum* thinks, and feels the pulse of the world, but because the *Orbis terrarum* must shape its thought to the local thought of Rome, and because the brain of the Church is not considered to be diffused over the five continents, but to be concentrated in the Vatican.

In practical working, however, it is not the pope personally who governs Catholic thought and opinion, but the various congregations and commissions whom he "consults," and whose decisions he may adopt or reject. These commissions again are under the influence of what is, I think, *the* great tyranny of the modern Church, *sc.* the theological schools—the "*consensus theologorum*." If this meant the free and independent agreement of qualified experts *au courant* with all the data of the problems in question, it would indeed be a valuable, if a purely natural, criterion of religious truth. But in point of fact it is a purely artificial *consensus* enforced from without, as little worthy of consideration as the uniformity of a regiment of soldiers. If we find all Jesuits morally unanimous against the theory of predetermination, and all Dominicans equally unanimous in its favour, it is plain that this *consensus* cannot be taken as the result of free judgment, and that not reason but some outward cause of belief is at work ; *e.g.*, the deposition of dissident professors ; the suppression of dissident



publications ; the creation of strong corporate bias, etc., etc. The unanimity of all the theological schools, in those matters where they all agree, is maintained by precisely similiar methods, and has no critical value whatever. Within the narrow limits of this externally imposed unanimity the better minds may exercise themselves in subtle analyses and deductions ; but let them threaten to question the presuppositions and under they go, or out.

Owing to both its *a priori* and its medieval character, scholastic theology is a subject in which men of no general education or culture can start on an equal footing with others, and it calls for a sort of analytical subtlety of mind not usually allied with the kind of judicial sagacity needed for dealing with those concrete historical problems which are now so pressing. Indeed the abler synthetic minds are often repelled by a method so strange to modern intellectual instincts, and are eliminated rather than selected by the seminary system. Metaphysics, (and scholastic theology is chiefly metaphysics) by reason of its necessary obscurity, is the department where mediocrity and slovenliness of thought can most easily mask itself under the semblance of profundity, and where the intellectual charlatan can lie longest undetected. Yet in the ecclesiastical *milieu* it shares with theology the glory of being the queen of sciences to whose rulings all must submit, and it offers a short cut to all human knowledge ; or at least is conceived to give a right and power of universal criticism independent of any laborious study and inquiry into the positive and concrete.

Take, then, a set of men mostly from the uneducated classes, where a superstitious awe of learning obtains, and a hankering for its glories second only to that for social rank and wealth ; train them up almost ex-



clusively on this windy metaphysical diet with little or no corrective in the way of positive knowledge, scientific or historic; equip them moreover with a certain power of wordy meretricious rhetoric of the "pulpit oratory" description, and what can result but just that intellectual inflation and ignorant arrogance which characterise these so-called "theologians" as a class? Add to this that they can put forward their conclusions not merely as philosophical speculations but as the oracles of God; that they claim to hold a sort of spiritual power of life and death in their hands, and we have all that is needed to constitute one of the worst intellectual tyrannies the world has ever known, in which we see "Folly, doctor-like, controlling skill" in the name of religion.

It is, however, as allied with the newly defined authority of the Roman Pontiff that these schools have become such a power for evil. It is manifestly impossible that the pope should think for the whole Church and be wise with its collective wisdom; hence he must necessarily rely upon his consulters and be content to re-enforce their opinions with the seal of his own ecumenical authority. It is as thinking for the pope that the theologians have become omnipotent. *En revanche* it is their corporate interest to defend the extremest views of papal infallibility and ecclesiastical inerrancy; to maintain the apostolicity of their views; to deny all true dogmatic development; to impose the past as a mould on the present and future; to push the present back into the past in the very teeth of history. Through their relation to the pope and his Curia they hope to dominate the mind of the whole Catholic world, not merely in theology but, at least indirectly, in every other department of knowledge that in any way impinges on their territory; and to bring all under what they call the authority of "the

Divine Teacher"—in short to introduce an intellectual theocracy of the most fanatical type. Confounding faith with theological orthodoxy and accuracy, and assuming that Christ's mission was primarily theological, they argue that the Church must necessarily possess the same power which Christ had of settling every speculative doubt on the spot—which, in default of inspiration, can only be effected by a combination of theological dialectic and papal infallibility.

The childish simplicity of this whole theory commends it to simple minds, dominated by the aforesaid confusion between faith and theology, and consequently distressed and perplexed by theological differences between Christians. They find rest in the theological unity of the Roman Church as though it were something miraculous—as indeed it would be were it spontaneous and from within, and not merely enforced from without like that of a regiment of soldiers.

Such, then, is the practical situation at present. In cases of controversy it is no longer the *Orbis terrarum* which is the ultimate (slow-moving and liberal) arbiter; but nominally the pope; really, the so-called theologians. Thanks to this extraordinary misplacement of authority it is these latter who now impose their theological reasonings on the *Orbis terrarum*, and arrogate to themselves the functions of the Holy Spirit working through the entire organism of the Church. Those who fully realise this state of things can no longer regard every utterance of Rome as an expression of the *Sensus Catholicus* of the world, or pay more attention to it than is due to the fanatical little clique whose mind it represents and from whose intrigues it emanates.

By "official" Catholicism we mean therefore the system of these Scribes and Rabbis of the New Law,

who keep the key, which they cannot use themselves and will suffer no one else to use.

It is this theological system that we find confronted by all the difficulties already summed up in outline. If we ask Rome (*i.e.* the theologians) for a solution, we are answered, never in detail, but only in general, *i.e.* by a re-assertion of the "official" theory of the Church's inerrancy; if we question the accuracy of this theory we are told that our position as Catholics is a dishonest one. But this latter is a verdict which we can consistently qualify in just the same measure as we are disposed to qualify the authority of the tribunal from which it proceeds.

Our "officials" theoretically do not even pretend that in virtue of their consecration and appointment to the episcopal office they receive any miraculous revelation or increase of theological perspicacity that dispenses them from the ordinary method of study and inquiry. At most, in virtue of their call to the teaching office, they lay claim to a special grace to stimulate and encourage them in the use of natural and ordinary means; and perhaps to a special providence over-ruling their inevitable mistakes to the eventual good of the Church, or saving them from such as might be irremediably injurious. If deference is due to their decisions it can only relate to problems *that have been put before them*. But where they are manifestly ignorant of the chief premisses and data of a problem their conclusion must be set aside as worthless; for it is equivalently a case of "cross questions and crooked answers"; the question answered not being the same as the question put. The appeal from the pope misinformed to the pope duly informed is perfectly legitimate, however liable to be used as an evasion in particular cases.

Further, moralists hold it no valid baptism if one

man pours the water and another says the words ; both parts of the sacrament must be executed by the same minister. Similarly it is no papal or episcopal decision if pope or bishop blindly put his official seal to the inconsidered document of some consulting theologian or congregation. He cannot, they say, delegate his charisma. Only so far as he has mastered what is set before him, and made it part of his own mind, is his decision held to be official. If Leo XIII. could persuade us that he had mastered all the data with which criticism deals and had reached a different conclusion we should, in this view, have to prefer his decision of an open question to that of the critic. But is there the slightest reason to suppose that the pope and the critic are dealing even approximately with the same data ? Hence the condemnation of the latter by the former need not alter a single judgment founded on the merits of the controversy. It might only prove that Rome still hopes vainly to bring down the fast-rising walls of the modern Jericho by the braying of brazen trumpets, rather than by the skill of sapper and miner.

If then we are forced to consider this " official " view of the limits of the Church's inerrancy irreconcilable with established facts ; if we can only hold to it by denying many things as evident as, or far more evident than, any reason we might have for accepting it ; it is plain we must look round for some other view that will be compatible with our adhesion to the Church, and with the honest acceptance of facts at least as well vouched for as any on which Christianity rests.

In vain do we turn to our official guides for an answer to the perplexities raised by history and criticism. We ask for bread and they give us a stone.



## PART II

### A LIBERAL RE-STATEMENT OF CATHOLICISM.

#### § 1. RELIGION AS A SPIRIT.

WE have said that the essence of the Catholic, as opposed to the Protestant, position lay in accepting the Church rather than the Bible as the ultimate authority in religion; that it was common to both to allow an exercise of private judgment prior and subsequent to the acceptance of such authority; "prior," so as to justify one's acceptance of it; "subsequent," so as to ascertain its rulings. The only "private judgment" which the Protestant claims and the Catholic denies is that of interpreting the Scriptures. It is in taking the Scriptures as his supreme rule, not in using his own judgment to interpret his supreme rule, that he differs from the Catholic; for the latter also interprets the rulings of his Church by an exercise of private judgment. Even if *de facto* he often takes the word of his parish priest as the voice of the whole Church, yet he has to make out for himself what his priest means.

It is, from the very nature of things, at least *logically* impossible that the limits of an authority in doctrine should be fixed by that authority itself, and not by reasons addressed eventually to the subject's private judgment. If the Bible proclaimed itself inspired wholly, or in some restricted sense and degree, it



would not thereby prove itself so. Nor is the Church in better condition: *Non enim qui seipsum commendat ille probatus est, sed quem Deus commendat.* The Pope is not allowed to be infallible because he defines himself to be so; but because he has been declared so by the recognised infallible joint-authority of Pope and Council together. Nor is this joint Pope-and-Council authority taken on its own word, but because of the presumed consensus of the Church and Fathers. This again is accepted on account of some external reason, such as the authority of the Apostles or of Christ himself; but at last we must come to something that is not authority—some reasons that establish the existence and the precise limits of authority. The Protestant must say why he believes his Bible, and why so far, and in what sense; and the Catholic, why and in what sense he believes his Church.

The motives for accepting and retaining an authority need not be, and in most cases are not, intellectual or purely logical. It suffices that the laws of the mind be not manifestly violated, in order to justify one in yielding to motives of the practical, moral and affective sort—for so men live in other matters. But if it is a fallacy to suppose that religion is a purely intellectual matter, it is a twin fallacy to suppose it to be a purely affective matter. It is the highest life of the soul; and as such it is an affair of the whole soul—of head and heart—and must violate none of its essential exigencies; and of these, reasonable coherence is one, however subordinate. What is truly consoling, beautiful, serviceable and good must be true; but if it is not true, then it is not truly good, but only apparently good.

It has been said that when a man has climbed to the firm platform of faith by the ladder of reason, he may kick away the ladder and can regard its destruc-

tion with indifference. True, he may never need the ladder again (unless for his less fortunate friends below); still he can be indifferent to its destruction only so far as he has found some other ladder to serve the same purpose.

The consolation and help which the Protestant gets from the use of his Bible might conceivably furnish him with a subjective reason strong enough to set off against the havoc that the higher critics have wrought with his original reasons for accepting it as the word of God. And the convert to Catholicism, who has *lived* his religion, may conceive that he has a new argument stronger than all the Petrine texts. But these are *reasons*; and not appeals to the authority in question. Even if we understand the gift of Faith as a miraculous psychological bent of the will which can only be resisted with a bad conscience, this again is also a *reason* (however subjective and incommunicable) for submitting to authority. Of course such subjective reasons are open to much illusion. But if the Protestant can show that the help and consolation he gets from the Bible is not *dependent on his belief* that it is the inspired word of God, or on the prayerful dispositions with which he reads it; that it is absolutely unlike what he ever gets or could get from poetry or from other religious literature studied in the same spirit; that the help is not due to those embodied truths and sentiments which are common to all religions, and to the fidelity with which he corresponds to his conscience as moved by what he reads; in short, if he can satisfy himself that no other hypothesis but that of divine inspiration can plausibly explain these subjective effects, then he has got an experimental argument worth tomes of apologetical treatises.

Similarly, if the Catholic is sure that he has become a better man *in consequence* of practising his religion,

and that he has not practised his religion only because he became a better man ; and that it was owing to what is distinctively Catholic, and not to what is common to Catholicism and all religions, that he became better ; and that he is really and absolutely better, and not only as judged by distinctively Catholic standards ; if he is sure that it is some inherent power in the sacraments that has sanctified him, and not his expectation of such an effect, or the diligence of his co-operation, or the dispositions with which he received them ; and that he was worse or better because he received less or more frequently, and not conversely ; and that the rites of other religions, treated with the same faith and reverence, could not have possibly produced so manifestly miraculous an amelioration, then he too has a better reason for his trust in the Church than any apology *de Ecclesia* could possibly afford him, and can treat all purely mental difficulties with disdain so long as they do not involve him in manifest self-contradiction.

So, too, as regards arguments drawn from the public and general effect of a religious system ; and others of a practical and experimental nature—all alike are exceedingly complex and ambiguous ; but, if well established, they are of considerable weight ; and may well outweigh any number of speculative reasons so long as these constitute only a probability—and they rarely or never do more, in so concrete and positive a matter as the truth of a religion.

Reasons they are nevertheless, of however practical and affective a character, nor can any doctrinal authority do without such reasons, or stand proof for itself and its own limits. It may and should state its claims, but to state them is not to make them good.

Hence too there is a fallacy in the contention that when we have once convinced ourselves by reason of

the duty of submitting to the Bible or to the Church, we can *never* be justified in re-opening the preliminary question; that we have equivalently convinced ourselves that it is our duty not to re-open the question, and therefore may never do so with a good conscience. Of course there is a foolish and unpractical habit of fiddling with the foundations of our spiritual life, whether through curiosity or through a desire for an unattainable mathematical certainty in the realm of religion and morality. But it may be asked whether any man who knows his judgment to be fallible in all but the most barrenly abstract matters, and who knows that all the wisest heads in the world are at strife over religion, can justifiably resolve never, under any circumstances, however the sphere of his knowledge and judgment may be extended in after years, to re-open a question answered upon a necessarily limited view of the data: and again, whether in spite of himself the question may not be re-opened for him by the inquiries of others, or by the dialectic of his own mind—over which in many respects he has no free control.

In a sense, therefore, in spite of recent attempts to define the methods of apologetic authoritatively, the question as to the existence and limits of a doctrinal authority must always remain open; nor is this inconsistent with a supreme faith-certainty as to what is believed upon that authority. For that certainty is a *will*-certainty; and Faith, as even Thomas Aquinas teaches, has it in common with opinion that, viewed as a purely intellectual conclusion, it lacks mathematical certainty and leaves the mind free to deny; it can only be regarded as supremely certain because there is practical reason enough to make it right and prudent to throw one's whole will and life into correspondence with the belief with an intensity such as the testimony of God



Himself would merit. Yet this act of will supposes the practical reason aforesaid ; and should this latter be upset, the other is no longer justifiable ; and Faith must be suspended.

If the question of the existence and limits of doctrinal authority is in some sense open it is also in some sense closed, so far as one maintains or desires to maintain the Catholic position. Catholics as such must view *the Church* as the ultimate authority in religion, and those who hold so much cannot be anything else but Catholics. But it may be said that much more is needed to satisfy the ordinary sense of the term. This raises the whole question of the Ethics of Conformity, with which we shall deal at the end ; at present we need only ask ourselves what is involved in this minimum criterion of Catholicism.

As Christians by profession, Catholics and Protestants alike take Christ as their supreme guide in religion. He being personally inaccessible, his mind and teaching must be sought in the Church, according to the Catholic ; in the Gospels and dependent Scriptures, according to the Protestant.

The Church cannot claim to be more than Christ, but at most to extend the benefit of his ministration to times and places that have not known him in person ; to be his Vicar or Vice-gerent.

The "official" view of the Church's doctrinal vice-gerency is open to two very serious criticisms ; first, that it assumes a disputable view as to the nature and purpose of Christ's teaching ; secondly, that it assumes an unqualified or a very exaggerated conception of the Church's vice-gerency in the matter.

First, then, it assumes that Christ's mission was as directly dogmatic as it was prophetic ; that he attached the same kind of importance to theological orthodoxy as the Catholic Church has done for centuries, and



does to-day, not less but more than ever ; that by Faith he meant orthodoxy, correctness of theological position ; that he meant believing things intellectually perplexing because they were proved by miracle to have been revealed by God. If he fell foul of the Jewish theologians, it was, we are to believe, by setting up a counter-theology and not by disdaining theology in its too arrogant pretensions. Faith was a humble sense of one's own theological incompetence, and of the duty of accepting the theology of divinely-commissioned authorities as soon as miracles and prophecies had convinced one's private judgment of their divine commission. And so he taught the whole Catholic creed in substance, leaving merely the "explication" and application of it to the Church of after times.

Grotesque a travesty as this seems to be of the whole spirit and meaning of Christ's work as shewn us in the Gospels, yet so far as the Church claims to be Christ's authorised vice-gerent in proceeding in a like manner—*i.e.* on a purely intellectualist conception of Faith as being belief on testimony—she evidently assumes such a view of Christ's teaching-mission. But as apologists we must test this assumption, even though afterwards as Catholics we should take it on authority.

The Gospel shows us Christ as teaching indeed with authority, but not *from authorities* as the Scribes ; as one inspired with the prophetic spirit, like those prophets whose sepulchres were built up in scholastic commentaries that guarded the bones of their teaching but could not enshrine its spirit. And "the common people heard him gladly," as they will hear any man who speaks from that spirit which is the source of all true originality and "authority." *Pauperes evangelizantur* ; not the poverty-stricken in our sense, but the "little ones," the *poverelli*, the *minores*—those who were outside the intellectual pale, "accursed,

because they knew not the law." It is He who says : "Learn of me" not : "*to be*," but "*because I am* meek and lowly of heart," because I am not of the arrogantly "wise and prudent," not of the Scribes, Doctors and Lawyers ; not of the Theologians and Canonists, lusting to tyrannise over the minds of men as intellectual despots.

The Gospel preached to these *parvuli* was not likely to be a new theological system abounding in brain-puzzles unknown to the old system and imposed upon the simple-minded under pain of eternal damnation. It was in fact a recall from intellectualism and outwardness to inwardness and vitality of religion in view of the coming Kingdom of God : "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," is the whole substance of Christ's teaching in epitome.

Later reflection saw that in a secondary and dependent sense the Church on earth and the Christianised world might also be called proleptically the Kingdom of Heaven, and when the notion of an immediate Parousia was abandoned, much that was said primarily with reference to it was referred in an applied sense to the Church. But it is impossible not to see that the central and inspiring theme of Christ's message was his own proximate advent in Glory as the Son of Man or Messiah, to judge the world, to overthrow the kingdom of Satan, and to establish the Kingdom of God—the new heaven and the new earth in which the risen or transfigured Saints should reign with him, victorious over all their enemies. Of this advent and kingdom he spoke only in the current apocalyptic language of his *milieu*, leaving its exact nature and spiritual value veiled in the half-light of mystery ; but of the spiritual preparation, the "repentance" and change of soul, he spoke clearly and showed himself by word and deed as "the Way, the Truth, and the

Life," by which alone men could "come to the Father." Eternal Life must enter into us singly in order that we collectively may enter into it; the Kingdom of Heaven, now within each of us, is the needful preparation for the future external Kingdom which shall be the fitting medium and environment of that new life in its maturity.

Directly, explicitly, and in aim, this teaching is altogether practical and not intellectual; prophetic and not theological. Yet indirectly, implicitly, in its presuppositions, all practical teaching connotes a theory of life and existence, a doctrine of God and the world and man, and of their relations to one another. And so far as there was anything new in the Way and the Life that Christ set before us, we may infer a corresponding novelty in the underlying theoretical presuppositions; and we may even look for occasional explicit reference to such novelties or new developments. We must also allow an importance to such doctrinal implications, proportionate to their essential connection with that life and conduct of which they are the theoretical justification.

But it is the fallacy of abstract intellectualism to give the lead to theory in the process of life; as though conduct were shaped by theory, rather than theory by conduct. It is through acting blindly and instinctively that we come, by experiment, to have any notions of the world at all; and it is similarly by acting instinctively and on hazard that we are able to extend such notions and develop them. Thought but registers and systematises the results of our experiments for future use. In religion it is the impulse of the Spirit—of the religious sense—that drives us to action and experiment, and enables us thereby to build up a system of religious doctrine for our practical guidance. The understanding is but an instrument of life—the chart

we steer by. We may come to find an independent pleasure in the very exercising of it—the pleasure of pure speculation—but when we forget its natural subordination to conduct we fall into intellectualism. The Christ of the Gospel betrays no direct interest in doctrinal speculation for its own sake; but solely in those spiritual instincts of Eternal Life whose theoretical expressions and justifications are of altogether subordinate interest, and must stand or fall according as they succeed or fail to account for experiences far more immediately certain than any merely intellectual construction. As little does the world-old world-wide phenomenon of natural human love depend on the paltry and inadequate explanations of it that philosophers may excogitate; as little does it wait upon reason and regulate itself by its dictates, as does the Eternal Life of Christ's Charity wait or depend upon the success with which theology may analyse its doctrinal implications. Men can live without a theory of life, and love without a theory of love; though in living and loving they implicitly confess a whole creed of mysteries beyond any compass of their explicit understanding.

Hence the fact that mysteries were necessarily implied in the practical teaching of Christ does not make him primarily and directly a teacher of mysteries, still less a theologian.

On the other hand the "intellectualism" which confounds faith with theological orthodoxy has its counter-fallacy in "sentimentalism," which also results from not distinguishing between the true, mysterious and often utterly unattainable and inexpressible explanation of an instinct or sentiment, and its more or or less probable, relative, and inadequate intellectual expression or symbol. We are told that religion is to its intellectual expression as water is to its formula



H<sup>2</sup>O ; that men drink and live who have never heard the formula or who pervert it. Similarly religion is so entirely of the heart and affections that dogmatic beliefs are as indifferent as ritual and symbolism.

This is only partly true. Children of all sorts and ages live the life of religion without more than a lip-knowledge, if so much, of explicit doctrine ; and others through mere confusion of mind, as now so often happens, may sustain a total or partial eclipse of their orthodoxy without danger to their implicit faith. But if through positive chemical ignorance or error a man believes water to be poison he may not drink it or offer it to others ; and so if through positive intellectual error he believes his religion is poisoned by lies or immoralities he may not practise it, however his affection may move him thereto. As an affair of the *whole* soul, religion must not positively violate the mind, however it may leave it in negative ignorance, nor therefore can the absolute indifference of Christianity to dogmatic statements be seriously maintained. Within due limits (to which we may return later) the desire to formulate the mysterious implications of Christ's spirit of charity, to give their proximate equivalent in the terms and symbols of current language and philosophy, is justifiable and inevitable ; and Christianity without dogma is almost as impossible as Christianity without mysteries. In the Johannine and Pauline writings we see the first beginnings of this philosophic reflection upon the teaching of Christ, but that teaching itself was of another order.

Like other prophets Christ found his inspiration in a vividly realised intuition of the coming Kingdom of God, of its sovereign earth-and-time-dwarfing importance ; of the inevitable, irresistible and comparatively proximate triumph of good over evil, of reality over sham, of light over darkness. The faith

that is found in every good man who, in spite of the denial that the world shrieks in his ears, believes that truth will in some unthinkable way prevail, and justice in some inconceivable future be satisfied; that it profits a man nothing to gain the world if it be at the cost of conscience—this faith in him became vision, clothed indeed in the current eschatological imagery, but none the less immediate and evident. But unlike other prophets he saw himself as the King of that redeemed humanity, through whom their redemption was at last to be effected. Hence he not only called men to the Father and to the Kingdom, but to *himself* as the Way to the Father and as the Door of the Kingdom. His teaching was thus prophetic and not theological, though its mysterious implications were bound later to waken theological interest. Of Faith understood as an intellectual submission to a revealed theology he seems to take no account; but much of Faith as a dawning, though yet imperfect, vision of other-world realities and of the coming Kingdom and Judgment; not as an extrusion of our own theological system by the intrusion of another theology divinely guaranteed by miracles, but as the strengthening of a prophetic faculty, higher than cold reason, which sees now through a glass darkly what it will come to see at last, as he saw it, face to face. For though dim, Faith is a vision, an intuition of the *whole* soul, dependent largely on moral and affective dispositions; nor should it be, as it so often is, confounded with that “belief on testimony” which is after all only an inference of the understanding, and of which it might be said: “Thou believest that there is one God: thou dost well; the devils also believe and tremble.”

Again, Christ makes much of that distinctively *Christian* Faith, which looks to him for the cure and salvation of the soul with the same sort of instinctive,

though intellectually inexplicable, confidence as that with which the sick and the blind looked to him for the healing of their bodily infirmities: *Si vis, potes me mundare*—of the faith that cries out “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God,” however incompetent to formulate the theological implications of such a confession, or to reconcile it philosophically with the requirements of monotheism. He cared only that, practically, in their lives and conduct, men should acknowledge that the Father was in him and he in the Father; and that he was the Way, the Truth and the Life through whom alone men could come to the Father—even those who had never heard his name.

Hence it is morally and even intellectually impossible to believe that in regard to the conception of Faith, which both agree to be necessary for salvation, Christ and that theological terrorism, known as “the Holy Office of the Inquisition,” had anything in common; while it is evident to the most superficial that the true counterpart of this latter is to be found in the Sanhedrin which put Christ to death on the score of theological heresy.

As to the supposed importance of minute theological agreement, we may ask with a writer in the *Nineteenth Century* for May 1901: “Is it so very desirable, as it seems at first, that the Church should be infallibly assisted in every detail of her daily teaching? Is it not part of God’s general method to let us form and make ourselves through struggling and suffering and reach light through darkness, rest through labour, the cross through the crown. He helps us no doubt in all really necessary matters where we cannot help ourselves; but is it always wise or kind to help men where they *can* help themselves, and where the very conflict is more profitable than victory? When we subtract the claims of impertinent theological curiosity for which

Christ never intended to provide; when we bring the matter to the great test of eternal life, can it be said that outside the substantial teachings and instructions of Christ there are many matters about which infallible certainty is in any sense a spiritual necessity? Have the metaphysics of transubstantiation ever lifted a heart nearer to God for a single moment?"

"That they all may be one, and that the world may know that Thou has sent me" are words often quoted to justify the Inquisitorial conception of unity in Faith. But surely their explanation is found in the parallel: "Hereby shall men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another"; *i.e.* as children of one Father; and also in the omitted words: "that they all may be one *as Thou Father art in me and I in Thee*"; *i.e.* with a unity of nature and spirit and affection, not merely of theological agreement. Furthermore, as has been said, the only unity of opinion that would be at all miraculous or would argue a divine presence is that of perfectly independent agreement; not that of a more or less violently imposed uniformity which is no more wonderful than the uniformity of bullets made from the same mould. The theological agreement of Catholics is far more extensive and minute than that of Bible-Christians, but not being *absolute* it differs from theirs only in degree and not in kind; and the difference admits of a purely natural explanation.

For all these reasons therefore we may safely conclude that the view of the nature, range and temper of Christ's teaching, which is assumed by the "official" theory of the Church's doctrinal vice-gerency, is a mistaken one; inasmuch as that teaching was directly prophetic and only by remote implication theological; *i.e.* so far as it pre-supposed mysteries capable of theological treatment.

Our second criticism is that the Church's doctrinal



vice-gerency is conceived "officially" in an unqualified or very exaggerated form. And this is a distinct criticism from that bearing upon the constitution of the Church and the organs of her infallible authority. It asks what that authority is; and not where and how it is vested and exercised. The Church continues Christ's teaching ministry in *some* sense—this is assumed: but in *what* sense has to be determined.

According to "officialism" Christ instituted the Church so as to secure for future ages and all nations the same privileges in the way of doctrinal guidance enjoyed by his first disciples. They quote: "Lo, I am with you always even to the end of the world," and "As the Father hath sent me so send I you"; "All power is given me in heaven and earth; go ye therefore"; "He that heareth you heareth me," etc.; and the Petrine Texts: "Thou art Peter," etc. "Whosoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven"; "Feed my sheep—my lambs"; "Confirm thy brethren," etc, etc.

Assuming, for argument's sake, that these texts are authentic and literally exact, and inspired, and may lawfully be subjected to the usual theological exegesis and analysis (all of which is really questionable until we assume what these texts are adduced to prove); assuming also that Christ did not understand the "end of the world" as did the apostles and their immediate successors, but looked forward to at least 2000 years of Christianity for which he was making provision, we must first notice that the "officials" themselves are forced to admit that these texts prove too much, and have to grant a qualification which robs them of all their fresh *prima facie* force. For they were addressed to men inspired to reveal new doctrines, and the "power" which they received was Christ's own

wonder-working power. Now these powers of revelation and wonder-working are not claimed for the Pope and the Episcopate even by the extremest "official" theologians. If we argue that these words cannot have been meant for the hearers alone, but for their successors also, of whom however there is no mention (a silence quite explicable if the *Parousia* was viewed as immediate, within "this generation," within the life-time of "some of those standing here"; but otherwise quite strange) we but make an *à priori* inference of our own. We do so on the assumption that what was necessary for the early Church is necessary still, and *must have been* provided for. Yet we concede that "assistance" has taken the place of inspiration which, for some arbitrary reason, perished with the apostles; and that the evidence of present miracles has been replaced by the somewhat hazy record of past miracles. Can it be seriously affirmed that inspiration is less needed now than 2000 years ago; or that the confirmation of doctrine by miracles is not now more needful than ever? If it be answered: "Blessed are they that have not seen," the answer, more ingenious than ingenuous, cuts away all justification of apologetic theology, and ill harmonises with "Blessed are the eyes which have seen the things that you see." Is it more faithless to ask to see miracles than to ask for proof that they have happened in the past? May we seek for dubious signs but not for clear ones? If thaumaturgy be necessary as a divine warrant for doctrine, is it not doubly so for teaching that is merely "assisted" but not inspired? The latter might well carry its own conviction, spirit answering to spirit; whereas theological conclusions need some extrinsic support to raise them above the natural level.

When "officials" support the doctrinal authority of the present Church by such texts as: "Ye shall bear

testimony *because ye are with me from the beginning*," or: "He shall teach you all things *and bring all things to your mind whatsoever I have said unto you*," (cf. the Joint-Pastoral of the R.C. bishops of England, 1901)—words which, on their face, show their direct and exclusive reference to the eye-witnesses of Christ's ministry and works—they cannot but be conscious of a certain equivocation; for they admit that from Apostolic authority to ecclesiastical, from inspiration to assistance, from personal to corporate testimony, there is a *transitus in aliud genus*; nor is there anything in the Gospels, nor perhaps in the whole New Testament, which shows that the writers there directly contemplated or even foresaw this *transitus* or alteration in kind. So far as what we mean by Catholicism or the Ecclesiastical Magisterium has the support of *à priori* inferences from data there given, it must be justified as a development or not at all—no amount of mere "explication" will suffice; for the premisses are not all there, but must be sought also from outside—from outer facts, circumstances, principles and philosophies, which, combined with those of the Gospel, yield a product of double parentage.

If then the pope to-day were to arrogate to himself absolutely all that was said to St Peter and the Apostles he should consistently arrogate inspiration and wonder-working. We should have a right to ask him: What sign showest thou? Can you heal the sick; cleanse the lepers; raise the dead? We should have a right to demand apostolic sanctity in his life. It is then only in some remote, ambiguous, secondary sense that such words can be referred to the pope or the Church of to-day. So applied they are more misleading than enlightening.

"Officials" themselves do not deny that transition from "charismatic" to "institutional" authority which

critics affirm. The dispute is partly as to its mode, but chiefly as to its legitimacy.

In principle the Catholic system is at least as old as the first epistle of St Clement. There the Church is conceived as being *by divine institution* a corporation possessing officers whose authority is independent of personal gifts and determined solely by position, analogously to that of officers of the state. It is no longer in virtue of some special charisma of the indwelling spirit that the prophet or teacher has a claim to be heard as speaking *with authority*, or to exercise spiritual functions and ministries in the Church. He may do so only in dependence on the authority of office-holders, and of the government of the Church. The authority of these office-holders does not depend on their spiritual powers, but on their position in the organism or society. The right that they wield is radically the right of the whole body or of its head over its several members. Previously, authority was measured and graduated by the diversity of spiritual gifts and charismata; "to one the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, to another faith, to another prophecy," and so forth. "God hath set in his Church first apostles, then prophets, thirdly teachers"—such was the charismatic organisation of the Church as St Paul knew it. But he also knew of the disorders and abuses of such a system which were bound to manifest themselves, in the absence of all means of governmental coercion, as soon as false brethren crept in, and faith was dimmed, and love grew cold and the spirit languished. But whereas St Clement implies that this quasi-political government was instituted by Christ either co-existently with the other, or else with a view to times when the spirit should grow comparatively silent; criticism sees in it a device of later times to meet conditions that were



never foreseen by those who expected the Parousia within the life-time of the apostles. Not that the system was abruptly and deliberately invented, but that it was forced upon the Christian body by circumstances and favoured by certain easy and unconscious distortions of received principles and doctrines. That the institutional form was absolutely necessary for the saving of Christianity from speedy disintegration no one will deny ; but it is in asserting the *Divine origin* of the Ecclesiastical Polity and of the *Civitas Dei* that Catholicism is at one with St Clement, and at variance with the critics. The consequences of this assertion are manifest. Henceforward it is the supreme ecclesiastical authority, however vested, however uttered, that stands as ultimate and infallible judge and discerner of spirits over every prophet or teacher, whatever his charismatic claims may be. For this supreme government, no doubt, a certain charisma is claimed ; yet it is not that of the inspired prophet or apostle, but a mere *gratia status*, a power of interpretation, discernment, explication, such as was in earliest times conceded to the bishop, who, *in the absence of* inspired prophet, apostle, or teacher, acted as a sort of viceroy, and delivered and explained the doctrine he had received, not directly from the Spirit, but through others. Not only from the very nature of a supreme government in doctrinal matters, but largely through an application to the Institutional Church of promises made directly to the Charismatic Church and to the apostles personally, ecumenical decisions at last came to be taken as final and infallible.

With regard to this transformation by which the corporate authority of a community or of its officials was substituted for the authority of the Holy Ghost speaking through inspired unofficial individuals, two questions arise : (1) In what sense, if any, is this

social or corporate authority Divine? (2) What are its limits?

(1) According to the strictly Protestant conception (as exclusive of the Anglican *Via Media*) the "institutionising" of Christianity was a purely human, even if a justifiable, undertaking; and the error of Catholicism began when this device of expediency was attributed to Christ or his apostles, and regarded as of divine origin. That outpouring of the Spirit in which Christianity originated seemed almost to be the creation of a limited quantity of religious energy, whose manifestations were conspicuous only so long as it filled a few vessels to overflowing, but dwindled away to imperceptibility as it gradually became divided and sub-divided among many. Hence as faith grew dim, and love cold, and false brethren many, the support of an external institution became a necessity, so as to secure the sacred fire from complete extinction, for the benefit of future generations. It is however to the record of the days of Charismatic Christianity, as contained in the documents of the New Testament, and not to the ecclesiastical institution of the present day, that the Protestant looks for the light of Christ. It is to the reproduction of those conditions that his spiritual efforts are directed. He does not believe that his minister, elder, or bishop receives any charismatic gift by mere appointment and ordination to an office, but conversely that such a gift is a condition of his fitness for the office; that the two may, and often do, exist apart. Protestantism is an attempt to return to pre-Catholic Christianity; and this, in the light of recent criticism, is found to mean an attempt to get back to the year 70 or 80 A.D. when conditions obtained whose failure made Catholicism a practical necessity, if not a divine institution. Protestantism is therefore professedly a *revival* or *renaissance* of a

religion dead for centuries. It repudiates Catholicism as a corruption, and denies its claim to be a development. Its weakness lies in the fact that pre-Catholicism supposes a present and evident outpouring of the Spirit in patently supernormal gifts and charismata, in prophecy, tongues, wonder-working and the like, which renders institutional methods unnecessary and perhaps cumbersome. Now and then, especially with sectaries like the early Wesleyans or the Irvingites or Swedenborgians, some outburst of public religious enthusiasm has for a time reproduced something like the pre-Catholic conditions, but the troubling of the waters has been equally or more quickly evanescent, and where any good results have been perpetuated it has always been by means of a supervening institution which incorporated the waning spirit and husbanded its failing energy.

Here it seems to me Protestantism (in its essential principle) is in conflict with the psychology of the individual and the multitude, in its vain effort to perpetuate what of its very nature is as evanescent as a thunderstorm or a spell of fine weather. Most of us have experienced seasons of spiritual and emotional exaltation or enthusiasm, in regard not only to religion but also to other interests of the soul, which might be conceived as outpourings or, better, as up-wellings of a Divine Influence; as manifestations of a higher and better self always thrusting upwards into the day—not by an evenly regulated growth, but by irregular spasmodic efforts, from which it sinks back exhausted, having gained a little each time, as the waves of an incoming tide gain each upon the results of its predecessor. The inexperienced fondly hope that these Tabor visions have come to stay and can be housed in some tabernacle of their own construction; and it is only after many disappointments that they

learn the essentially transient and unmanageable nature of such favours, which are given not for the enjoyment of the moment, but as a preparation for the long intervals of dull weariness and mediocrity. The fruit of these rare hours of clear vision and high courage is to be stored up in the form of readjustments of our understanding and our practical judgment, to which we can hold on when the light is with us only as the dim memory of a flash thrown upon our path through the darkness.

It is not otherwise with those public and general enthusiasms, whose true fruit is lost whenever men mistake a spell of fine weather for a change of climate and fail to make provision for the days when "the Bridegroom shall no longer be with them." Here again it is in adjustments of the public understanding and practical judgment—in institutions, laws and regulations, that the fruit of the spiritual visitation is to be stored up and the way prepared for some fuller visitation in the future. What we see in general is first, as it were, the gathering of a psychological mist over the face of the earth, to be condensed later into a cloud of fertilising rain. A vague feeling or sentiment gains ground, the result of confluent causes hard to trace back more than a few steps. After perhaps many attempts to find voice and formulation, this spirit attains utterance through some one soul more deeply and intelligently in sympathy with itself, that becomes the prophet or apostle of the new movement and explains and embodies it for the general understanding. Such a man naturally draws round him as disciples those who, albeit in a less degree, are under the same psychological influences as himself, and, by giving their thoughts and feelings the aid of imagery and language, fosters their spiritual growth and raises them towards his own level of more explicit and



conscious inspiration. While the moral atmosphere remains at all favourable, the movement spreads spontaneously as fire in a dried prairie. The enthusiasm seizes those who are at all predisposed to be fuel for the flame, and makes them agents for the disposing and kindling of other fuel. While these conditions obtain, there is no need for the fetters of law, system or organisation, which hurt rather than help the free action of the Spirit. But a limit is soon reached for various reasons. The freshness of novelty wears away; the fire that first seized only the driest wood has at last to fall back upon the damp; at first only the boldest and most congenial spirits were selected; later the feebler and less intelligent swell the ranks and lower the average of excellence down to, or below, the line of mediocrity; and the wave of spiritual force so laboriously gathered up is scattered and spent over the broad level sands, unless foresight has taken means to utilise and store its energy in the mechanism of some institution.

If the vitality of the "institutional" phase of a movement shows poorly beside that of the "inspirational" stage; or if (turning back to the working of the same law in the individual) our days of cold reason and labouring effort seem dull and heavy contrasted with our brief moments of exaltation and vision; yet it must be remarked that under the enthusiasm of the Spirit we are passive rather than active; *agimur, non agimus*; we enter into a fuller and richer life than our own—the life of the All—but then it is *not* our own, though we fain would make it so, and though we are destined to appropriate it more and more. No doubt it is pleasant to be thus borne up and supported by the eternal arms; but to be supported always, is to be crippled. We are thus helped from time to time, only that we may afterwards walk the better when left to

our own weakness. The feeblest crawling that proceeds from our own vital force is, so far, more to be prized by us than the swiftest racing that we owe to the strength of another, and it is to the growth of this independent vitality that the aid of the Spirit is ever directed—whether in the case of the individual or of the multitude. Hence the truth: “It is good for you that I go away”—the more meagre results of “institutional” Christianity may have, in some sense, a greater value than the more abundant fruits of the Charismatic or Inspirational phase; for these were of God through man, those, of man through God. The end of the religious effort is not to absorb man into the Divine, but to reproduce the Divine in man—to give him power to become, or to make himself, a son of God. In the very nature of things, therefore, every public enthusiasm or spiritual movement tends to transform itself into some sort of permanent institution.

Thus no political, economic, philanthropic, artistic or scientific cause is trusted by its first preachers and advocates to so precarious and incalculable a force as enthusiasm, but is straightway made the end of an organised association of some sort, which serves two purposes—first, it works rationally and methodically for those aims and according to those methods that have been, so to say, “revealed” to its originators; secondly, it preserves a record of their ideas which may serve now and then to kindle a like fire in other kindred spirits, and so effect revivals, renewals or developments of the original inspiration, such as those revivals of Christianity effected by saints and reformers.

In regarding the “institutionising” of Christianity as a corruption; in vainly hoping to perpetuate and generalise the “inspirational” phase, Protestantism seems to me to ignore universal and natural laws.

But it may be contended that, without being a corruption, the Catholicising of Christianity (*i.e.* its transformation into an institution with graces attached to offices rather than the converse) is a purely human work, the result of man's co-operation with the Spirit ; that it cannot be considered a divine institution ; that certainly it is doubtful if Christ himself ever contemplated such a transformation.

That Catholicism was explicitly instituted or even foreseen by Christ may, from the apologist's standpoint, be doubted or denied. All the texts adduced to that effect were addressed immediately to men endowed with the charismata of prophecy, inspiration, wonder-working, etc. ; if also to their successors, this is only an *inference* of our own, from what *should have been*, to what actually *was*. It is however more probable that Christ, like his apostles, believed that the end of the world would come within the lifetime of some of his hearers, and before the extinction of the generation which he addressed. Hence, unlike other prophets and reformers, he made no provision for a future "institutionising" of his cause ; but trusted that the "inspirational" impetus would last "unto the consummation of the world." To err in a matter explicitly excluded from the scope of his revealed message was to prove himself "perfect man" even to the limitations, though not to the culpable limitations, of our nature. Indeed to suppose that Christ foresaw the whole future history of his Church, all the conflicts that would arise from the paucity and obscurity of his utterances ; all the doubts that a clear word of his would have solved ; all the controversies that have split Christendom into fragments and cost the spiritual destitution of countless millions—and that, foreseeing all this clearly, he deliberately wrapped, or even left, the truth in obscurity

is, from an apologetic standpoint, antecedently irreconcilable with a belief in his goodness, wisdom, and pity.

This is a point in which the "official" has not merely to prescind from his subsequent theology, as logical method requires; but even to deny and affirm what, as a theologian, he will afterwards have to affirm and deny. In other words theology, by its teaching *de scientia Christi*, etc., cuts away the apologetic argument so far as this rests upon a *natural* ethical estimate of the human character of Christ. On the old Augustinian view, quietly abandoned after the Jansenist controversy, that the first Adam, in virtue of his very nature, was exempt from certain limitations now recognised by theology as perfectly natural, and as not *per se* sinful or penal any more than death, Christ as "perfect man" is credited with the same wonderful endowments as Adam, or greater; in addition to which his human soul is said to have been continuously blessed with the immediate vision of God; finally, as being also "perfect God" he possessed in the unity of his person the omniscience and other attributes of the Divinity. Hence, according to theology, his ignorance was always feigned; his progress in wisdom was feigned: "*Deus cujus Unigenitus se veluti proficientem in sapientia et gratia mortalibus sensibus exhibere dignatus est*" are the words in which the Roman Missal (*Inventio Pueri Jesu. Post-Com.*) sums up the theology of the matter; if he said "I know not" it was as when Nelson put the telescope to his blind eye and said "I see not"; his fear was feigned, for fear implies ignorance and weakness; his temptations were feigned, for where there is no possibility of yielding there is no temptation. For us, the moral combat is a combat with our own blameless and natural ignorance, passion, and weakness; the



moral hero is he "qui potuit transgredi et non est transgressus; potuit mala facere et non fecit." It is, as really tempted in all points as ourselves, and yet as unlike us in unswerving fidelity, that Christ commands the worship of our moral nature. By the time theology has done with him, all the inwardness and reality of his moral life is gone and nothing left but pretence and outward grimace; or, to put it at the lowest, his character, as that of a being whose bewildering psychology has nothing in common with our own, evades all measures and standards of human morality and leaves us incapable of any clear judgment one way or the other. But when the apologist appeals to the veracity, the goodness, the noble moral elevation of Christ, he is weighing him in this very balance that theology pronounces false. Now as he may not assume what depends on the point to be proved (*e.g.*, the verbal inspiration of the Gospel) so neither may he assume what, when his point is proved by means of that assumption, he will afterwards have to deny.

The claims of Catholicism to be a divine institution cannot be rested by the apologist with any certainty on the supposition that the transformation of Christianity from its "inspirational" phase into an institution, officered and organised after the pattern of a secular monarchy or empire, was foreseen and arranged by Christ in view of those centuries which should follow the dying down of the initial enthusiasm roused by the belief in an immediate *Parousia*. If he did not share this belief himself, he at least so thoroughly accommodated himself, to it, and threw himself into it, as to make no explicit provision for its disappointment.

But if in the very nature of things, as has been suggested, every public enthusiasm is destined to embody itself in an institution, then this latter, as part and parcel of the same effect, may justly be

ascribed to the same cause as the former; if the enthusiasm in which Christianity originated was from God so also was the institution in which that enthusiasm naturally embodied itself from God, in so far as its existence and nature were determined by that same Spirit which found its highest utterance in Christ. It is not then precisely as a creation of Christ that Catholicism can claim to be divinely instituted, but as the creation of that Spirit which created both Christ and the Church to be different and complementary organs of its own expression, adapted to different phases of the same movement.

It is true that every step of the Catholicising process professed to find warrant in some word of Christ, but the reasons men give for their actions are not necessarily a true expression of the spirit or instinct which impels them.

Theology in general may be a poor analysis, or rational presentment, of the mysteries underlying the Christian life; and the theology concerning the Church in particular may be inadequate and largely fallacious without prejudice to the divine character of that institution.

The question is as to how far this institution can be regarded as a product of that Spirit which found expression in Christ and his immediate followers—assuming that Spirit to be the Divine Spirit as revealing itself through the religious sense of man. Naturally it will express itself differently in an individual and in a society; in a human heart and life, and in a system of doctrine, discipline and ritual; yet it may be unmistakably the same Spirit and governing principle.

In a sense, then, Christ is the criterion of the Church; it is in him that we see that particular embodiment of the religious spirit of which the Church

professes to be the extension—not necessarily in the actual historic personality whom we can never see except as more or less idealised and coloured through the lens of tradition, but in the Christ of the Gospels, of the earliest attainable tradition; and not only in that Gospel-Christ but in Christendom during its pre-institutional and fluid stage, when it was yet vibrating and radiant in the glow of its first fervour as liquid iron ere it hardens in the mould.

The Church Catholic is then the product of the same Spirit that has given us Christ and his Apostles, in so far as in the “institutionising” process that Spirit has exercised a suggestive, selective and corrective influence upon the natural workings of human intelligence and endeavour; in so far as the principles, ends, and aims of Christ’s own life and mission have guided the process of development by which the Catholic system has been built up in the course of centuries. The notion of a complete ecclesiastical organism produced abruptly by a divine *Fiat* on the day of Pentecost belongs to the same sort of philosophy as the Mosaic cosmogony. Catholicism is a divine institution in the same sense that the Bible is a divine book possessing divine authority. The modifications that criticism has enforced upon the latter conception must be applied to the former. If this means a break-down of theology in both matters, we must remember again that theory is always inadequate to fact, and that divine impulses are often wiser than human after-reasons.

As joint-effect or product of the same spiritual out-pouring, or up-welling, that gave us Christ and the Charismatic Christianity of his immediate followers, Catholicism is a divine institution possessing divine authority.

What then are the nature, scope and limits of this authority?

(2) In general, it is the failure of inspiration that renders an institution necessary and actually occasions its formation. The institution is designed to perpetuate, register and disseminate among the uninspired millions of average humanity those conceptions and ideals that have been revealed to the originators of the movement; and which, if not so registered and guarded, must perish as soon as the initial enthusiasm dies down and a supply of inspired propagandists can no longer be reckoned on. Like the works of the great art-masters of some classical period, these ideals form a public educational standard through which the latent faculties of multitudes of followers are roused, stimulated and guided to the attainment of results altogether beyond the capacity of even the most talented individual living apart from such external educational influence. Nor is it merely by an intellectual exchange of ideas, criticisms and principles, but still more by the subtle communication of sentiments and enthusiasms and tempers of feeling that an association fashions its individual members to its own ends. If the immediate purpose and advantage of such an institution as we are considering is the communising of the fruits of inspiration among the uninspired multitudes, and the gradual raising of the spiritual level (ethical, religious, æsthetic, philosophic, etc.) of all; yet a no less important end is the transmission of the very fire of inspiration itself to those whom it could never reach save through such a medium. In the atmosphere and environment of such a society this smouldering fire, buried beneath the warm cinders of mediocrity, will here and there burst up into flame again when it encounters congenial fuel in some creative soul, of the type that belongs to every age because it at once belongs to and rises above its own. Through these periodic eruptions failing fervour is everywhere renewed



and augmented, needful adaptations to altered surroundings are effected, new blood is infused into the whole organism, and the work of development is carried a step forward.

Were it not for such recurrent impulses, the force of the original impetus would at last die away; dead pedantic classicism, servile and literal imitation of the past, the superstition of blind custom-worship, would lead to the triumph of organised mediocrity over individual genius and would end in petrification and death.

However similar these renovations of the Spirit may be in many points to the original out-pourings, yet they are not the same, but rather developments of the same. He who has been spiritually born and bred in a school or society is bone of its bone and flesh of its flesh, and even soul of its soul. Originality is never absolutely creative, but only formative; it supposes matter to be dealt with and transformed. The new inspiration is clothed upon the old, and includes it as the later includes the earlier growth. If it contradicts or excludes it, then it is not a renovation but a substitution; not an adaptation of the same organism to an altered environment,—to changed knowledge and sentiment and belief and custom—but a confession that the limit of adaptability has been reached, and that the old must give place to the new.

An ideal adjustment of the progressive and conservative forces in society would secure a steady and healthy advance, and would dispense with the necessity of these periodic renovations, but, taking human life as it is, our progress zig-zags from point to point and never follows the straight line.

All this generalising applies particularly to religions and churches, more especially to Christianity and Catholicism.

That inspiration ceased abruptly with the death of the last Apostle and was replaced by a special *charisma* of Divine Assistance by which the Church was enabled to guard and "explicate" infallibly the "deposit" of revelation to the end of time, is the current "official" view of the matter, which moreover regards the said revelation as purely doctrinal, as a system of ideas verbally communicable. So much is undeniably true, that with the death of the Apostles—of the chosen eye-witnesses of Christ's life—the fountains of authentic and "normative" Christian revelation ran dry, and the criterion by which all other spirits were to be tried, whether they were of God—whether they were true to the archetype—was finally established. But the "institutionising" process that issued in Catholicism probably began before the death of St John (if the popular tradition be true); and the charismata of prophecy and revelation did not probably die out till long after their exercise had been brought under official control and criticism and had ceased to be *per se* a claim to authority. There have been like manifestations over and over again in the Church's history; but here we speak of those in which that out-pouring of the Spirit which gave birth to our religion died away—of, as it were, the last drops of that thunder-shower.

From the Pauline epistles and from the earliest documents, we gather that it was the break-down of the hope that the life of the Church could be trusted simply to the Holy Ghost, speaking through prophets, that made rational organisation and government a necessity.

As the enthusiasm diffused itself abroad it suffered a depreciation in kind; there were prophets and prophets, false and true and mixed, and there were lying spirits that made the criticism of all spirits necessary; and a method of guidance that was not

under immediate control, and that might fail when most wanted, was quite inadequate to the needs of a community which was growing in numbers and decreasing in fervour and purity of faith and love. Men never sat down and said: "The era of inspiration is ended; let us form ourselves into a society"; but almost insensibly, under pressure of circumstances, one phase dissolved into the other according to the universal laws that govern such transformations.

In his classical chapter on Charity (1 Cor. XIII.) St Paul comes very near to an explicit proclamation of the transition that he was then scarce consciously effecting, by applying the remedy of reason and order to the unreason and disorder incidental to the decay of Charismatic Christianity, when he insists on the secondary and merely medial character of all such extraordinary charismata as compared with that ordinary but nobler charisma, which is the very substance of religion, and to which the others are either purely ministerial or altogether injurious. "If I speak with tongues; if I prophesy; if I understand all mysteries and gnoses; if I possess wonder-working faith and powers of healing, what will it profit me if I lack that charity to which all these are but ministerial; if through love of pre-eminence I boast of my charismata as greater than those of others, as gifts of a greater Spirit, entitling me to greater authority, forgetting that all are manifestations of one and the same Spirit whose greatest gift is that Charity which loves organic unity and harmony between the head and the members; which is not envious or self-seeking or schismatic; which is not the transient need of a brief period, but 'never faileth' even when 'prophecies fail and tongues cease and gnosis vanishes away.'" Such is the burden of his teaching, which is presently followed by its practical application to the disorders

connected with the Eucharist, and by the beginning of those very institutions and regulations connected with that rite which were the germ whence was developed, first, the hierarchic system of Bishop, Presbyter and Deacon, and, eventually, the entire institution of Catholicism in which Christianity has incorporated itself [cf. *Sohm's Kirchenrecht* and *Weizäcker's Apost. Zeitalter*].

Whatever perplexity St Paul may have inwardly felt over the too-evident decay of the prophetic system, and the non-fulfilment of general expectations relative to a speedy Parousia, his religion, albeit mystical and enthusiastic in the highest degree, was too profoundly ethical and practical not to discern that Charity alone mattered ; that all else was but subsidiary and accidental. Herein he was true to the spirit of his Master's warning to those who could recognise the presence of God's Kingdom only in charismata and miracles ; " Rejoice, not that the devils are subject to you, but that your names are written in the book of life." To him, as to Christ, it was a continual source of disappointment to see how men worshipped the shadow of God's presence and despised or forgot the substance. Doubtless, there can be no upheaval or revolution in the secret and subconscious depths of man's spirit ; no growing sense of an awful nearness to eternal realities looming through the thick fog of mystery, but at the same time there will be disturbances and storms on the surface of his psychological life, super-normal and subnormal phenomena, which are outward evidence that the Kingdom of God is come nigh unto us. To value the sign more than the thing signified, the smoke more than the fire, belongs to the incurable childishness of the multitude. " Grieved with this generation," " faithless and adulterous," ever " seeking after signs," refusing to



believe "except they saw signs and wonders," a Christ or a Paul must have often deplored the need of an *ad hominem* appeal to such ambiguous testimony. With the growth of a healthier view, and a better grasp of the substantial reality of religion, the preternatural was soon thrust down to its proper level and brought under the law of Charity and the common good.

I do not suppose that any "official," from the Cardinal Secretary downwards, nor any theologian would care to dispute the proposition that the Church is before all else a school of Sanctity and Charity ; that her sole *raison d'être* is to reproduce the pattern of Christ as exactly as possible, in as many as possible ; that this simple end is professedly the ultimate justification of all her institutions, her hierarchy, her sacramental system, her dogmatic system, of all her battlings and diplomacy in defence of the temporal power ; of all the pomp and parade of the Court of Rome in its palmiest days ; of all the ceremonial, the purple and scarlet and fine-twined linen of bishops and prelates and cardinals ; of all that is mere worldliness, if not sanctified by that end, and mere fraud and hypocrisy if it only pretends to be so sanctified. Pass through the courts and halls of the Vatican Palace amidst the outward semblances of earthly vanity and secular power, and ask yourself the ultimate *Why* and *Wherefore* of all that you see and hear going on around you ; or ask the first Monsignore or Cardinal who will deign to notice you, and he will have to answer you, as gravely as he can, "Our sole thought and aim is, that men may love God and love one another as much as possible in the Spirit of Christ. We do not care about temporal power for its own sake, or for money, nor even for spiritual power over men's minds and wills ; nor for our own dignity and position ; nor for the system and institution which we defend ; but we

desire purely and simply to make men holy and Christ-like, and we are convinced that these are lawful and expeditious means to that end."

If then the Church is avowedly an art-school of Divine Charity, and if in every practical matter, in every work and institution, the end in view is also the first principle and criterion by which each step is to be judged and true progress is to be measured and developments are to be distinguished from corruptions or from mere results and by-issues, then we are in a way to determine the sphere and scope of the Church's mission, the limits within which she is the vice-gerent of Christ and his Apostles, and is destined to carry forward the work of that Spirit which created Christianity. It is primarily a Way or manner of life that has been committed to her guardianship, rather than a body of doctrine. The Faith which she holds as a deposit is not an intellectual or theological system, offered for mental assent; nor even a record of facts viewed as mere history, as mere links in the universal network of phenomenal sequences and groupings; but it is the highest life of the soul as brought into practical and affective relation with the (as yet) but half-seen and vaguely felt realities of the eternal world. If it is a truth, it is not a truth of the intellect, but a truth or trueness of the will to God, as of the needle to the Pole, the trueness of man to his deepest nature and highest destiny, the trueness of him who is the Way and the Truth and Life, through whom alone men can come to the Father. "This is the Catholic Faith which except a man believe faithfully he cannot be saved"; for to believe in a *way* is to walk in it; to believe in a *life* is to live it; to believe in Christ is to appropriate his Spirit and to be filled with it. Christ therefore, rather than Christology, is what has been committed to the Church

to keep and to impose upon men—a living spirit, rather than a system of ideas.

Taking Faith in this sense, Christianity is no doubt brought more into line with Buddhism, whose monks' *Credo* runs: "I put my trust in the Buddha; I put my trust in the Doctrine (*i.e.* of Deliverance) I put my trust in the Community"; *i.e.* it is presented rather as a school of life than as a school of thought—though it is this also in a certain very secondary sense, namely, so far as thought is one of the many factors of life.

An art of living is taught not merely by rules and precepts and explanations, but by discipline and example, by force of social influence, by the infection of public sentiment and fashion. The life of Divine charity is essentially a social life, and consists in a continual self-adjustment of our will to the Divine Will and to other wills which, together with it, constitute a certain spiritual and supernatural world in which that life is lived. As an institution the Church brings together all those who profess a desire to be schooled in the art of Divine Love as revealed in Christ, in order that by their collective study, experience and endeavour they may not only keep the art alive but bring it ever to greater perfection. [Nor must this art be understood as a slavish or literal imitation of the life of Christ "after the flesh," but rather as an application of the inexhaustible potentiality of his spirit to every conceivable variety of character, condition, country and period; else we should all have to aim at throwing ourselves as far as possible into the social and educational condition of the Nazareth of 2000 years ago.] A spirit in the practical order, like a principle in the speculative order, is infinitely rich in its capacity of application and development, and is developed in a somewhat analogous manner. Its value is known

only in combination, and is slowly revealed by an endless experimental process—like that of some chemical element which can never be obtained apart in its purity. Such a spirit as we speak of is not thinkable as existing apart, but only as existing in some limited application of its potentiality. It was in Christ as in no other, but only in the sense that no other life was so purely and absolutely dominated by it; not in the sense that it was adequately and exhaustively manifested within such narrow limits. It is in Christendom collectively, and in its whole continuity, that its content and meaning are gradually spread out and developed, as it were, in the mystical body whereof Christ is the Head; more especially in the Saints and Masters of the Art of Charity, yet also in sinners and penitents and mediocrities—in all who in any degree are brought under the influence of Christ's spirit, and in whom it can be studied as in some new combination.

We must however leave the vague, and try to say more exactly what we understand by a "spirit" in this religious and ethical sense. We do not directly mean that Divine Spirit which works within ours and is the ultimate source of all religious inspiration; but rather the human spirit *as influenced* by that Divine Spirit, as inspired with certain aims and ideals. When St Paul speaks of that "Charity of God which is poured abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which dwells in us," he marks these two senses of the word "Spirit," this "Charity of God" is a state of the human spirit of Christ as worked upon by the Holy Ghost. By an easy transference the word "spirit" comes also to stand for the personified aims and ideals of the spirit so worked upon; but here we mean by it the religious attitude of the soul of Christ, as kindled to enthusiasm by a sense of some special



nearness to the realities of eternity. By "enthusiasm" we mean here the spiritual incandescence or fervour created by the deep realisation of some truth of vital moment for humanity; the sudden generation and storing up of an immense fund of energy and love consequent on such a revelation. And we call the apprehension which gives birth to the energy a "sense," to express its intuitive immediacy and to distinguish it from any formal conception or inference of the understanding. An enthusiasm not based on some intuition or apprehension would lack all specification and object; *Nihil volitum nisi praecognitum* is a sound axiom of the Schools. But as to the *kind* of knowledge that precedes every desire, discernment is necessary. It is not necessarily the formal knowledge of the understanding. When our action is instinctive or quasi-instinctive, it is governed by reasons that are buried more or less inaccessibly in our sub-consciousness. Could we successfully analyse the implications of our desire, we should find ourselves wise with the garnered wisdom of all Nature.

Observing the regularities of grouping and sequence which obtain in our outward sensations and aided by the gathered experience and reflection of others whose lip-language and mind-language we appropriate, we build up for ourselves a map or plan of the order of these phenomena by means of which we can to some extent control their occurrence to our own advantage; we put the world together bit by bit as it is successively given us, and keep it pictured in our mind as a co-existing systematised whole, much as a blind man forms in his mind a plan of the house he lives in.

This world, from which we conceive our outward sensations as proceeding, is common to all of us and forms the medium of our communication, the material of our language and symbolism, the limits of our clear

understanding. To understand anything else, and still more to speak about it to others, we must first translate it into the terms of this outward world ; we must materialise it and "naturalise" it. But there are other worlds, other departments of reality, given us by inner experiences that exist for ourselves alone, and can only be communicated to others after they have been translated into terms of that outer world of our senses and understanding which is common to all. The experiences of our conscience and of our religious sense are no whit less *real* than those of sight, hearing and touch. But their full implication, and the sort of world and order of reality from which they proceed is densely obscure, since we can discuss the matter with others only through language derived from the outer world.

The more perfectly our understanding is formed, instructed and educated, the more widely and deeply do we enter into the implications of our present momentary experiences and sensations. To *understand* them means to classify them, to pass by inference from what is near to what is distant in space and time ; to receive them as hints of a whole tract of outlying reality not given us immediately ; to group them as being each the fruit of a complexus of causes, and the germ of a complexus of effects. Yet could we even grasp the *whole* system of those possible experiences given by our relation to the outer world, and control them absolutely to our service, still that which touches us through them, that which with ourselves is joint-parent of their existence, lies hidden in mystery.

Of our inward experiences, moral and religious, we understand the sequences, groupings and implications most imperfectly, being thrown back so much more exclusively on our own narrow personal experience ; while as to the nature of that which touches us

through them and is brought near to us in them, as being, with us, their co-parent, we are left in the dark except so far as we can use self as a key or measure to interpret the not-self.

The discoverer, or recipient of a revelation in the religious world is one who, in virtue of some unusual experience or contact with the Divine, is enabled to bring order and law into the confusion of the past, and make a world out of a chaos. "Here, as in the knowledge of the Nature world, we owe much, no doubt, to the ordinary daily experiences and reflections which are in some measure within the compass of all men ; of those who start normally from the results, given them by tradition, who work out and verify for themselves the rules and principles that others have formulated, who prove the worth of the theoretical construction by its life-value. But we have a right to expect that this world too should have its Newtons ; its revolutionary discoverers and originators to whose gifts and graces the whole race is indebted ; men to whom chance, so-called, has granted altogether exceptional experiences revealing the secrets that lie nearer the very heart of things, and enabling them to reconstruct and revolutionize our previous constructions of the over-world with a truth, not indeed exhaustive, but as different in kind from that previously attained as the science of Newton is from the magic of a sorcerer." Yet it is not enough to have discovered for oneself a truth which affects humanity ; it is necessary in this case before one can utter it to translate it into the terms of the outward senses and the natural understanding ; to embody it as adequately and forcibly as possible in symbols and concepts. And thus we are brought to consider the relation of doctrinal Christianity to that "Spirit" of Christ which is the true "*depositum fidei*" ; and to understand

how it is that the former has come to usurp the position of the latter.

For the *Caritas Dei*, the "Spirit" of Christ does indeed depend on certain truths and apprehensions by which it is generated and characterised; but they are truths of immediate intuition and contact, and not those symbols of the sensuous imagination nor those concepts of the natural understanding into which such experiences have been translated for purposes of communication to others. To exhaust the full implication of the least of our common outward experiences would need an infinite mind, and would involve an understanding of all possible experience. Yet to one, here and there, a clue is given, a unifying law or principle which can be followed up indefinitely, though never exhaustively, by himself and by those who come after him.

Thus it is *à fortiori* with the inexhaustible implications of the Spirit of Christ, which he himself translated into the terms of our senses and understanding when he came preaching the Kingdom of God and himself as the ruler and prince of that kingdom. The eternal and unseen realities, by contact with which his spirit was fired, were one thing; the mental picturing and understanding of these in terms of things finite and temporal, was another. But besides the mental and verbal expression there is the still more important *practical* expression of his spirit, which he gives us in his whole life and passion and death. The "Our Father" illustrated by the crucifix is perhaps the best epitomised utterance of the Spirit of Christ; its full explication and development is still in process in the life of the Christian community; and here too it receives a twofold utterance—verbal and practical.

"She is one of those people who are known, as one may say, by subscription: everybody knows a little, till



she is astonishingly well known altogether ; but nobody knows her entirely." This quotation from a popular novel <sup>1</sup> illustrates well the manner in which a personality or a "spirit" can be gradually comprehended by a society in which each member seizes only some particular aspects of its rich potentiality, and where it needs a conference of the whole "crowd of witnesses" to build up their several contributions into a unified whole. Thus it is with the Spirit of Christ in the Christian community ; no person—not even Christ himself—no nation, no age, exhausts its infinite richness ; though by the communion and interaction of spirit with spirit ; by the conference of people with people, and age with age, it receives a progressively fuller manifestation and embodiment, such as would be impossible were the labour not committed to social co-operation. Outside such a society the isolated individual is cut off from the corporate life of Christ ; he is deprived of the heritage of the gathered experience and reflection of multitudes and generations from which, as from a starting-capital, he may set forth in quest of further gains ; he is cut off from the stimulus, the infection of enthusiasm, that is yielded by co-operation with others who are animated by the same spirit, who live for the same ideals as himself. There is a level of enthusiasm known as the "heroic," which abounded in the pre-institutional stage of Christianity, and which rendered the individual independent of social help ; but as the initial shock diffused its force, and general enthusiasm sank below the heroic, social aid became a necessary condition of spiritual life. A further consequence was that, as the spirit was communicated from man to man ever less by the mere infection of enthusiasm and by its utterance in action, its verbal utterance and expression became more im-

<sup>1</sup> "The Hand of Ethelberta," by T. Hardy.

portant as a means of conservation and propagation ; it was more through an appeal to men's minds that their wills had now to be stirred in the absence of the more vivid and effectual appeal of personal inspiration and enthusiasm.

Thus, no doubt, it was that the "depositum fidei," the treasure entrusted to the Church's care came gradually to be considered as a system of doctrine rather than as a spirit.

What then is the relation of Christian doctrine to the Christian Spirit? or what has orthodoxy to do with Charity?

## § II. RELIGION AS A DOCTRINE

Doctrines and dogmas belong to the understanding. The understanding is before all else an instrument of life and action. In its lowest form life consists in response, by way of selective self-adaptation, to the impression of the moment. Next, memory and association make it possible in various degrees, by a *semblance* of inference, to pass from the near and present to the distant and future. The present impression now calls up to mind those past sequences and groupings with which it is associated ; and, just so far as Nature is uniform, such memories, clustering round the immediate impression, give a wider outlook, by means of which action can be adapted to a wider world than what is given us in that immediate impression. The thieving cat perceives not only the milk, but the chastisement which followed the theft on some previous occasion, and acts now on a wider view of the world than formerly.

But the aid which mere memory thus affords to our limited outlook is very fallible, and is itself limited by the range of our past experiences. Aided by the reflex

notions of uniformity and law, the understanding enables us to go by inference beyond the range of actual experience, *ad infinitum* so far as uniformity is assumed to be universal; and thus to adapt our action to conditions infinitely distant in time and space. The building up of our understanding is the work of reason, reflecting on observation, and aided by language through which we appropriate the collective understanding of the society into which we are born. This understanding strives to reconstruct mentally that mechanism of Nature with which we have to deal, and which we can use and master just so far as we understand it. So far as Nature is irregular our understanding is of no use to us as a guide; where law fails, inference fails. Though the understanding assumes universal law and regularity of grouping and sequence as the very object of its quest, it can never possibly attain to more than a bare outline of the infinite complexity of the concrete; it will always be to Nature what a pocket-map is to the city of London—a sufficient guide in certain matters for certain practical purposes. The pocket-map will not tell one where the traffic is blocked at any given moment. That men find interest and pleasure in the mere exercise of the understanding for its own sake, does not show that its true natural purpose is other than life and action; any more than the acrobatic art proves that legs and arms were made for contortion. Every faculty in health is exercised with pleasure, and has a sort of life and action apart; but this is wholly subordinate to the total life and action of the entire organism, constituted by the harmonious and orderly functioning of all its members conspiring to a common end. The violent divorce of the understanding from the hierarchy of our spiritual faculties, and its deification as an end in itself, invariably leads to an idle,

hair-splitting, cobweb-spinning intellectualism. As an instrument of life, its truth means its trueness to its purpose ; its efficiency as a guide to the absent and the future. It can never hope to comprehend the entire mechanism of Nature, short of which its comprehension of any part of the system must be imperfect. But, from the observation of such parts it can make hypotheses of ever ascending values, according as they unify more and more of the previous irregularities ; but as being necessarily an attempt to describe the whole in terms of some part such hypotheses are always inadequate. Yet they have an approximate, a regulative, an equivalent truth ; as, for example, when we speak of Nature as a mechanism or an organism or a kingdom.

The proper matter of the understanding, so conceived, is that world of the outer senses common to us all ; in which our animal life is lived ; which is our medium of intercommunication, the basis of our language and symbolism. So far as spiritual realities need to be discussed and spoken about, so far as they are to regulate our outward action, they must first be understood, *i.e.* they must be represented by some non-spiritual symbol and placed somewhere in the map of our understanding as factors of the space-and-time world ; they must enter into that "schematisation" of experience by which we guide our speech and conduct. Moreover, so far as the sequences and groupings of our inward religious experiences are regulated by law, and can be brought under control, some construction of the spiritual world in terms of the natural understanding is a necessity of spiritual life—some figurative presentment of (*e.g.*) a Kingdom of Heaven which, however speculatively inadequate, will be practically true as a means of guiding our feet into the way of peace. All that ascetical and mystical teaching which



is directed to the government of the very inmost movements of the spirit is of necessity couched in metaphorical language, and offers at best a sort of guidance from analogy. "The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto" something which it is not; nay, it is not even strictly a kingdom; what it *is* we cannot understand or say, though we can feel and know.

The doctrinal and dogmatic system of Christianity is the understanding of the mental construction of that spiritual world to which we are related by the life of Charity. It is fabricated by the public Christian understanding inspired by the spirit of Christ; and has the same authority for the individual Christian as the natural life-theory or world-theory, as the history and science, which he inherits together with the language of the society into which he is born. Alone, he might construct some very crude and elementary doctrinal system from the data of his personal religious experiences; but if he is to be more than a wolf-man, he must appropriate the gathered fruits of past generations. Avowedly this construction of the Church's understanding is built on lines laid down by Christ in his doctrine of the Father, the Kingdom, the Messiah. But it has been notoriously expanded step by step with the expansion, explication and development of the Christian spirit. The function of religious doctrine is first of all to fix and embody the inward sentiment begotten of contact with the Divine; to describe it as accurately as it can be described in the language of another world. Sentiments can only be described indirectly by their occasions, causes and effects. Thus the story of the Prodigal Son describes the inward phenomenon of conversion only indirectly, and that by way of analogy—it is a spiritual state somewhat akin to that which would be produced by such circumstances.

To speak of Charity or Love as a simple homogeneous sentiment, varying only in quantity, is an obvious mistake. Love is exactly specified by its motive and object and is never twice the same ; always immeasurably complex.

The Charity of the Christian Spirit, which in Christ was raised to its maximum of enthusiasm, is a love of God and of mankind in God ; it is characterised at once by a particular apprehension of the nature of God and of the nature of man, and of their relations to one another both in this life and in the beyond ; by the apprehension of a certain supernatural and spiritual system of wills, centred round the Divine will, and destined to a continual expansion and development in conformity therewith. This specifying or characterising object, from its very nature, is not one that admits of being properly, or otherwise than metaphorically, expressed in terms of the natural understanding. At most, we can say : The sentiment is analogous to that which would be yielded were such and such things true.

The Christian creed even in its most elaborate form is mainly a closer, though indirect and analogous, definition of the Christian spirit. It is however more than this. It is also a guide to life as expressed in speech and action. We are to live with reference to a world conceived in these terms, and by so living we shall deepen and develop the spirit of Christian charity. We are not only to speak, but to act, as though the Absolute were a spirit of threefold personality—Father, Son and Spirit ; Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier of mankind. Christ is to be to us, for purposes of life and action, the Son Incarnate, very God of very God ; the Host is to be, not the symbol, but the verity of his Body offered in sacrifice on calvary ; Mary, the immaculately conceived and ever-virgin mother ; and so of the rest.

But what sort of truth or trueness is this? How does it differ to say: "The host shall be to us *as* the Body of Christ"; and to say: "It shall but symbolise that Body?"

This objection would hold good did we contend that the truths of the Creed were *purely* regulative, were mere arbitrary fictions with no relation to ontological reality or to the necessary nature of things. Such pure fictions may suffice to guide the hand of art, but not the hand of Nature. No conception whatsoever of the order of Nature or of the order of Grace can conduce, widely and regularly, to the development of the natural or spiritual life, except in virtue of a certain approximative agreement with ontological reality. Life is the very test and measure of its truth; or, in other words, its practical truth is grounded in its speculative truth. But then, in the case of religious truth, this ontological ground is not to be sought in the empirical and physical order of reality, but in the spiritual and "metempirical," in the realm of the Absolute, beyond Time and Space. There alone it is that the ontological values of these doctrines are to be sought, which err, not as overstatements, but as immeasurably defective understatements of the truth. If the Host is not materially and literally Christ's Body, it is so really and super-really and not merely symbolically; and the practical, regulative and relative truth of this dogma is rooted in its ontological truth—"Eye hath not seen; nor ear heard; nor the heart of man conceived" those inwardly felt truths which the understanding, inspired by the Spirit, presents to our eye and ear and conception.

The Church (*i.e.* institutionised Christianity), as we have said, presents this Creed, this body of symbolised eternal realities, to the mind and understanding of her children as a means of waking, forming, and educating

in them that same spirit which gave birth to these conceptions. But we must not suppose that the revelation was given to her from heaven in the same way as she gives it to us—as it were, from an external teacher. If man could not begin to live till he was presented with a map of Nature, he could not live at all. It is by living that he is enabled to construct such a map for himself. So too the Christian Creed is the fruit of the Christian life as lived first by Christ, subsequently by the Church ; it was he who gave it its first mental expression and embodiment in the doctrine of the Kingdom of God ; and upon that basis the rest has been slowly built up by the Church under the dumb guidance of the Spirit. “Dumb,” because it is analogous to the guidance by which the fire leads a blind man towards itself through his experience of greater or lesser warmth ; or to the manner in which the roots of a tree are guided to the water. No modification of doctrine that is not life-giving, that does not foster and develop charity, can survive ; it lacks the truth or trueness of correspondence to the spirit of Christ.

“There is a double truth in religious doctrine as in poetry, which in this respect resembles religion in that it uses certain truths of history or science, in order through them to communicate certain affections and will-movements. What is historically false may be poetically true ; though, in certain cases the truth of the fact is a condition of the poetical truth ; nor will fiction always serve as well as fact. In the case of religion, which regulates our relations with the will-world, and does not rest in solitary unrelated feelings and emotions, indifference to fact is not tolerable, except in the sense that religious value can never be so tied to any accidental error as to perish by the discovery of the truth, which must always be eventually



a gain to religion, whereas it may often be a loss to poetry. That texture of philosophical, scientific and historical beliefs, in which the religious sentiment of Christianity has embodied itself by a process of inspiration, claims to be in harmony with the rest of human knowledge, of which it is but a part, and, so far, to be true with the truth of the understanding; but its religious truth lies in 'the spirit that quickeneth,' in its fidelity to the facts of the will-world, compared with which 'the flesh,' the merely mental value, 'profiteth nothing.' From every new ingathering of knowledge the same spirit can weave itself a living garment of flesh, not less but more pliant to its purpose of self-manifestation than all previous garments. Hence, the religiously important criticism to be applied to disputed points of Catholic belief, whether historical, philosophic, or scientific, is not that which interests the historian, philosopher, or scientist; but that which is supplied by the spirit of Christ, the *spiritus qui vivificat*. Is the belief in accord with, and a development of, the spirit of the Gospel? What is its religious value? Does it make for the love of God and man? Does it show us the Father and reveal to us our sonship?"

In saying that the great end of religious dogma and doctrine is the revelation and communication of the spirit; or the figuring-forth of ontological realities that belong to the eternal order of being, and are but shadowed in the world of time and space, we do not mean that these doctrines are of such stuff as dreams are made of.

True, even men's dreams and purely poetic creations are shaped by the spirit that is within them. Christ, in common with all religious teachers, embodied much of his spirit in what was avowedly parable and fiction. The Church deals extensively in symbolism as an

instrument of spiritual formation and instruction. To a large extent it is indifferent whether a principle be illustrated by a fact or a fancy. Who cares or need care whether the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus, or the story of Job be history or fiction? The religious truth which the Spirit utters in both cases has to do solely with the nature of God, the nature of man, and their relations to one another. Apply this criterion steadily to much in the way of doctrine that is supposed to be vital simply as history, or as science, or as physical fact, and it will be clear that we should have as little right to resent the denial of the empirical side of those doctrines, as we should have to feel that we had been basely deceived on discovering that the story of the Samaritan was a mere fabrication.

But a man's spirit not only determines his dreams and voluntary fictions and is revealed in them; it also largely controls the building up of his mind and understanding, whence its character may as surely be inferred. Fallible as man is in his quest of truth, he has no wish to fail when he endeavours to put history together, or to construct some system of science, philosophy, ethics or theology. The inevitable minglings of false with true in his results are involuntary, and he labours incessantly to purge out the dross and to approximate towards the unattainable goal of perfect truth. In this labour he is largely guided by some ruling idea, principle or spirit which exercises a stimulating, selective influence in his use of the material from which he builds. For, as has been said, the understanding is an instrument of life and is fashioned to those ends to which life is directed. Men do not care to know, nay, they do not and cannot even see, what *in no way* affects them or can affect them.

There is then a double truth to be noticed in all this work of a man's understanding, so far as it is determined

and inspired by his spirit—(1) its correspondence to the facts and laws of the world to which it professes to be a practical guide; (2) its correspondence to the character of his own spirit. Under the first aspect it may be more or less false, and yet perfectly true under the second. Thus a man's ethical system, his code of right and wrong, may be most faithfully determined by his hedonism, or his altruism, or his idealism, or his patriotism. But his judgment as to the sort of conduct which subserves these ends will be faulty in a thousand matters. His system is true to his spirit, but not altogether true to facts; true as a revelation of himself, not as a revelation of the world.

Christianity as a doctrinal system, as a construction of the understanding, is a selection not of poetical, but of theological, philosophical, ethical, scientific and historical beliefs and conceptions, shaped and inspired by the spirit of Christ. As such it has a double truth—its truth to the world of man's outer experience; its truth to the spirit of Christ and to the order of eternal realities of which that spirit is the product. Under the former aspect, it is a necessarily fallible approximation to natural truth; under the latter, it is an infallible approximation to supernatural and eternal truth. We must therefore distinguish the form from the matter, the principle of selection from the material selected. The Spirit of Christ seizes from the chaos of current beliefs—theological, ethical, historical—those that are most appropriate for its own embodiment and progressive expression, and weaves them into a garment adapted to the present stage of its own growth. If the choice and the weaving is its own, the matter chosen is the work of fallible man in his quest for truth. It is in the former, in the choice and the weaving, that the product of inspiration is to be sought; and not in the "beggarly elements" of man's

devising; in the heavenly treasure, and not in the earthen vessel—*Spiritus est qui vivificat, caro non prodest quidquam*. If therefore in any point of philosophy, history or science, the traditional Christian belief should prove, as it so often has proved, mistaken, it matters as little as the discovery that Dives and Lazarus never existed; it is not *ad rem*. It only means that the revelation has been recorded in blue ink rather than in red or black. We can know God only as he reveals Himself, not, as He *is*; He was not much more disguised in the anthropomorphic theophanies of the Old Testament, when He walked and talked with Adam in the cool of the evening, than He is in every theological conception of our understanding, even the most spiritual and expurgated. That He should present Himself to us as three persons in one nature is not more strange than that He should present Himself as a person at all; and can only scandalize those who fancy that their conception of Him as a personal Spirit has an adequate ontological, and not merely an equivalent practical truth. And the like is to be said of all particular beliefs of the Creed wherein the Christian dogma of the Trinity is expanded, and which serve to fix, characterise and develop more fully the spirit of divine charity by which they have been inspired and shaped. In the measure that we live in the light of these doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Atonement, the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection and Ascension, Heaven and Hell, Angels and Devils, the Church, the Sacraments, the Communion of Saints—we shall be brought into closer spiritual harmony with the Absolute which reveals itself to us in these forms through and in the mind of the Christian Church, stimulated and guided in its selection of beliefs by the spirit of Christ. In no fuller way can God reveal himself than in man's thoughts about God, in man's



reflections on the nature and meaning of the Spirit that strives with his own. No voice from the clouds 'mid the thunders of Sinai could win credence till submitted to that inward tribunal of the secret conscience.

Our mind is constitutionally materialistic; we cling to matter, to "the flesh," and call it "reality"; the "spirit" is for us a thin sort of thing, the mere ghost and shadow of reality. Or else, by "spiritually true" we mean only mentally, symbolically true. Thus the Protestant says that Christ is *spiritually* present in the Eucharist when he wants to deny the "real" presence; and the Catholic often acquiesces in the distinction from a secret belief in the super-reality of flesh and bone. All the foregoing explanations of the truth of Christian doctrines will, for similar reasons, delight the rationalist and scandalize the orthodox; yet most unjustly. We talk of the Protestant view of the Eucharist and of the Church as "low"; of the Catholic as "high"—meaning that the content of the latter is richer. Now the views here advocated are not lower but higher than those of "official" theology; for though less literal and materialistic, they are more spiritual and real; they give Catholic doctrine, primarily indeed a pragmatic truth, but nevertheless an ontological truth as well, on which this is founded; but it is in the order of absolute reality and not in the order of those appearances which constitute the matter or "reality" of popular thought.

We are now perhaps in a better position to understand the nature of the Church's authority in doctrinal matters. We have seen that the Faith deposited with her to guard and cherish was a certain spirit and way of life—*i.e.* the supernatural life of Divine Charity; that this spirit is generated and characterised by a certain mysterious contact between the soul and the

vaguely felt realities of the eternal order ; that so far as this spirit is to be communicated from soul to soul, through the medium of ideas and language, rather than by the infection of enthusiasm in its higher stages, it is needful that these felt realities of eternity should be translated into terms of the natural understanding. We have seen how, by the collective spiritual labour and co-operation of a community, the inexhaustible richness and potentiality of an ideal or an inspiration may be progressively unfolded and developed ; and how that development is itself guided and dominated by the principle developed ; in other words, how it is the spirit of Christ, fired with the aims and ideals of the Gospel, that works itself out and manifests its infinite possibilities in the religious life of his mystical body.

But this development of the spirit involves and implies a parallel development of its doctrinal expression in the understanding, where its growth and movement is registered symbolically as by its shadow cast on a screen. Here, too, the resultant body of public doctrine is the work of human industry indeed, but as guided and inspired by the spirit of Christ, under whose influence the materials to hand are selected and put together.

While aiming at the truth of harmony with the whole world of our natural understanding as at least a *desideratum*, it is as being true to the spirit of Christ, and to the eternal realities by which that spirit is fed, that this body of public doctrine claims our submission. It gives us a construction of the world by which, if we adapt ourselves to it, practically and effectively, we shall be brought into harmony with the spirit of Christ in its present stage of development. Doctrinal development, as here understood, can come to an end only when the development of charity, and

the collective religious life of the Church comes to an end,—only when the infinite treasury of Christ's spirit is exhausted.

It will not be necessary to insist at much length on the educational advantage of external and social standards of thought, feeling, speech, and action, in religion as in other matters; or on the spiritual impoverishment entailed by severance from the corporate life, growth and development of the mystical organism of the Church. A public rule of belief and life is liable to many abuses, but they are not such as to take away its use and necessity. When such a rule is viewed as final and exhaustive; when the expression of some particular stage of social growth is apotheosised and taken as adequate to all possible stages of the same; when in defiance of history it is read back into the past, and when it is violently imposed on the future; then it becomes a Procrustean bed on which the individual soul is racked and distorted to the destruction of its personality; while in the community at large a dull mechanical uniformity imposed from without is substituted for the spontaneous unity of the spirit. Obedience to social rule becomes an evil when it is understood as a conquest of that true self or personality which it is its very function, not to crush, but to develop. To assimilate the spiritual acquisitions of the society to which we belong is the primary condition of self-education. Not till this task has been accomplished are we in a position to effect those original and personal modifications and enrichments of the same, by the accumulation, criticism, and selection of which the corporate mind of the community is gradually developed. The man who through ignorance, self-conceit or incapacity fails to appropriate the common mind, and strikes out for himself in some other direction, cannot pride himself

on originality but only on eccentricity, freakishness and priggishness. He differs from public opinion not because he is better, but because he is worse, informed ; not because he has gone beyond it, but because he has not got so far ; not because he comprehends it and includes it in something greater, but because he fails to comprehend it and is content with something less. The general mind is a rule and standard by which we have to correct a certain inborn *unlikeness of defect*, by which we are separated from the common type. Personality means a certain self-wrought *unlikeness of excess*, by which we surpass that type, remoulding what we have received to our own individual image and likeness. Disobedience may be described therefore as that sort of wilful and irrational eccentricity by which a man refuses due respect to the gathered experience and reflection of the community to which he belongs ; and from this the notions of obedience, and of authority its correlative, are straightway deducible.<sup>1</sup>

It will be clear then in what sense, within what limits, we attribute a supreme and even a divine, authority to the *consensus fidelium* over the individual Christian—it is, as embodying the results of the collective spiritual labour of the Church up to the present date—a labour through and in which the spirit of Christ has developed itself in the mind of the community. We cannot regard all stages of the movement as exhibiting progress evenly in the same way or degree. It is through fluctuations that our mind grows, and not by uniform advance ; yet our periods of darkness contribute to the result no less than our periods of special illumination. So with the growth of the *sensus fidelium* ; at times the light burns low when the last outburst of inspiration begins

<sup>1</sup> For all this cf. the last pages of Class's "Untersuchungen zur Phaenomenologie," etc.



to exhaust itself; but soon the flame finds some apt fuel and bursts out anew; the lessons of the time of laxity are turned to profit; its errors, sins and dark-nesses are made to yield light in the form of dear-bought experience.

But, obviously, as the Christian community spreads itself along the centuries and over the face of the earth, it is ever harder to bring the scattered fragments of its mind into contact and communion with each other, and to gather up and declare its general sense. To this end an organism such as that of the Catholic system is a necessity. The notion of a central ecumenical authority, whose function is to gather up, formulate and propose (rather than impose), for the guidance of each, that truth which under the influence of the Spirit has been worked out (up to its present stage of development) in the minds of all;—of an authority whose declaration of the general mind should be taken as final in case of dispute—this notion is altogether in accordance with our general line of thought. But how does it tally with the official interpretation of the Vatican Council, or with the actual history of the development of the Catholic Organisation?

We have said already that the “charismatic” phase of Christianity merged insensibly into the “institutional.” It was never formally declared or acknowledged to be at an end. This holds specially of the teaching office. The Church was theoretically supposed to be taught by prophets for centuries after the supply of prophets had failed. It was in individuals, or in particular gatherings, that the Holy Ghost was conceived to work, more or less miraculously, and to utter infallible oracles, rather than in the mind of the whole Christian people, according to the ordinary laws of mental growth, guided by the spirit of Christ as by a governing principle. That the prophets of

the first age should utter, incompatible oracles, professedly by the same Spirit, was one of the first signs that the "charismatic" phase was failing. It now became necessary to "believe not every spirit, but to try the spirits if they were of God, because many false prophets had gone out into the world"; and to try them by their agreement with received dogmas in which the universally accepted results of past inspiration were fixed and formulated: "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God." So far however as a prophet spoke by the Holy Ghost, his utterance was of course of ecumenical authority; what he said, or what God said through him, was as true for all Christians always, as for each Christian then;—"He that heareth you heareth me." Still owing to the growing uncertainty as to the *fact* of his inspiration, or as to its complex conditions and exact measure, he soon sank to the level of what we now know as a preacher. The preacher is still in theory supposed to have some sort of *charisma* and to speak by the Holy Ghost; but it is so diluted an inspiration that it counts for nothing as compared with his natural gifts of knowledge and eloquence. We listen to him only as to the one authorised and educated by the Church to expound her official teaching to us, not as to one directly authorised by the Holy Ghost, and *for that reason* approved by the Church. His grace presumably follows his commission and does not precede it.

If the first little councils—those "gatherings of two or three in Christ's name"—claimed prophetic power, it was not in virtue of the critical value of a conference, nor because "two heads are better than one," nor because "in a multitude of counsellors there is wisdom," but because of Christ's promise: "There am I in the midst of them." They spoke as the Church

in epitome, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and therefore with ecumenical authority; for the Holy Ghost cannot lie. They *were* the whole Church—not as adequately representative of its body, but as animated by its spirit, as an adequate organ of its utterance—for the Church was then viewed as analogous to those all but amorphous organisms of the amoeba type, whereof each fragment reproduces the functions of the whole. But like the individual prophets these collective oracles soon lost credit by their incompatible utterances, and needed to be tried and criticised by some higher criterion. Later still, it came to be believed that the oracles of a synod owed their value not so much to the charisma inherent in a Christian assembly as such, as to the presidency of the bishop, who in virtue of the Apostolic succession inherited a share of the Apostolic charisma. At first, every episcopal synod was supposed to speak with the voice of Peter, and to settle controversies for the whole Church.<sup>1</sup> But bishops and synods also differed; so that eventually the *whole* episcopate, *i.e.* what we now call the ecumenical council, became the heir of this elusive charisma of prophecy. Every lower tribunal ceased to claim it, or to exercise any other doctrinal authority than that of a council or conference of fallible divines, whose conclusions might be set aside by the ecumenical council. The teaching power of this latter was, and is, held to be “charismatic”; it is not as a theological conference, but as the organ of the Holy Ghost that its utterances bind us as of faith—just as, earlier, the utterance of prophet or assembly or synod was supposed to bind us. Were there two or three Catholic Churches instead of one, their several ecumenical councils might be found to differ, and we might have to bring them all into a yet higher unity.

<sup>1</sup> For all this matter see Rudolph Sohm's *Kirchenrecht*.

As it is we can only compare the council of one age with that of another—the Vatican with Trent, and Trent with the Lateran ; and as each incorporates and builds on the results of its predecessor there is no patent scandal of conflicting oracles. What we must note is, that the authority of the General Council is in theory *charismatic* ; it is not a democratic institution ; the organ of the Holy Ghost is not the whole Christian People whose mind is gauged, represented and formulated by their assembled bishops, but it is the Episcopate in virtue of its Apostolic succession and of its presumed inheritance of the Apostolic spirit of prophecy. The only critical value of the *sensus fidelium* is that of a mirror reflecting the episcopal mind. A *charisma* that is denied to the bishops singly, and belongs to them only in their unity, must be eventually located in the principle and centre of their unity—the successor of Peter. The same practical dialectic which had formerly concentrated the prophetic grace of the assembly in the bishop, now concentrated that of the universal assembly of bishops in the Pope. In the Vatican decrees, as interpreted by the mind of their framers, the process by which the claim to charismatic teaching-power had been driven from one stronghold to another was brought to a conclusion. Every other hypothesis had proved itself practically untenable. Unity *must* characterise doctrine that claims to be divine. As long as the office of “Divine Teacher” was claimed by more than one, the claim was again and again disproved by their differences ; hence the only hope was that it should be disclaimed by all except one. If then the Pope’s claim breaks down, the case for “charismatic” teaching-power will be closed ; and the severance between institutional or Catholic, and the pre-institutional or pre-Catholic Christianity, will be completed after a struggle of two



thousand years. For, paradoxical though it may sound, this clinging to the more or less *miraculous* charismata of Apostolic days is in principle Protestant, as we have already implied (p. 56), and is inconsistent with the Catholic: *Securus judicat orbis terrarum*. The latter is an appeal to the more or less *natural* criterion of a multitude of counsellors—the highest criterion being the consensus of all. To call it a “natural” criterion is however not to exclude the action of the Holy Spirit which, in the form of Divine Charity, or the spirit of Christ, is shed abroad in the hearts of the faithful. If in each of these singly this spirit is a supernatural grace, yet it cannot be called a *charisma* in the sense of a miraculous gift of gnosis or prophecy or interpretation. To determine the implications of this spirit by conference and intercourse is to have recourse to natural means; and yet the utterance of such a council or conference may be regarded as the voice of that spirit which is diffused through the multitude. The interpretation can never be adequate or final for all times; but it is never false, and it is the highest public rule of truth at present procurable.

The ambiguity of the Vatican decrees has been already adverted to. In the mind of the dominant theological clique, which forced them through and which has since tried to interpret them in that narrower sense, which was opposed by the defeated minority and excluded from the letter of the text, they claim for the Pope a miraculous *charisma* of interpretation—just that which was claimed of old by the prophets, assemblies, synods, etc., until their fallibility was demonstrated experimentally by their differences. But even by the extremists this claim is put forward timidly, with failing faith and under many conditions—infallible utterances must be confined to

rare and urgent occasions ; they must be *ex cathedrâ* ; professedly ecumenical ; there should be consultation and inquiry and recourse to other natural means of avoiding a blunder. Still, when the interpretation is given it is infallible, not in virtue of these means, not as a summary of natural evidence, but in virtue of a *charisma* that must be called *miraculous* because it attains the truth independently of natural means ; because no after-discovery of a flaw in the alleged evidence is allowed to vitiate the value of decision. Yet if the charisma is miraculous, why all this recourse to natural means ? Why not a more bold reliance on the supernatural ? The only tolerable answer is that there is a divine law of economy and that it is only when, and if, natural means fail that God works miracles ; so that *in fact* not all *ex cathedrâ* utterances are true in virtue of miraculous intervention ; but most, in virtue of natural methods of investigation. Thus the claim to miracle is squeezed to its smallest dimensions, and all but extinguished.

It is, however, absolutely extinguished *in principle* by the wider interpretation of the Vatican decrees which unconsciously assumes a “democratic” as opposed to a “monarchic” conception of the Church’s teaching authority. In that view the Pope has no other special grace than every man gets for the discharge of his appointed office on the supposition of due co-operation with grace and absence of fanatical presumption upon it. His office is to investigate, declare and impose with official authority on each that truth which under the guidance of the Holy Spirit has been elaborated in the minds of all collectively as by its sole adequate organ. It is only as that of final and absolutely ecumenical arbiter that his office differs from that of other bishops, and because there is no appeal to any wider assembly than the universal

Church of the moment. On the same principle, it was only as the publicly accepted final exponent of the *sensus fidelium* that the ecumenical council claimed or had a right to claim a certain practical infallibility—not in virtue of a special preternatural gnosis resident in the episcopate and denied to the rest of the Church. It was in the mind of the *whole* Church that the spirit of Christ unfolded itself—lived itself into further explicitness; for the doctrinal evolution is involved with, and inseparable from, the moral evolution, of which it is but the intellectual expression and symbol; and it has so far never been maintained that sanctity was the monopoly of the *Ecclesia Docens*. The true Teacher of the Church is the Holy Spirit, acting immediately in and through the whole body of the faithful,—lay and cleric; the teaching of the episcopate consists in *dispensing*; in gathering from all and distributing to each, with the authority, and in name of, the whole Divine Society. In this function no doubt the episcopate receives the assistance promised to every office duly exercised and can, like all lawful authorities, appropriate in some sense the promise “He that heareth you, heareth me”—though not in the sense in which it applied to the inspired apostles alone. In this view the Vatican decrees simply complete the structure of the organism by which the scattered mind of the Church is to be more effectually brought together, developed, ascertained, and declared.

The way has been prepared for centuries for this final abandonment of the *charismatic* claim. Each breakdown of that claim in its wider form has been remedied by some unconscious concession to the “institutional” and democratic principle, *i.e.* to the logically necessary consequences of the Catholic idea. When the differences of prophets were referred to the spiritual discernment of the assembly; when those of

bishops were referred to episcopal synods, and these again to still more representative gatherings; and when the ecumenical council was made the supreme court of appeal—what was all this but appealing from charismatic authority to that which naturally resides in a multitude of counsellors, in an assembly of experts?

Experts, however, in what? In Christianity—the vocation of all? or in theology—the vocation of a few?

For meantime Faith and theological orthodoxy had become almost identified; and the disputes between bishops, synods and councils turned largely on the metaphysics of the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Sacraments. Hence the councils became representative of the theologians, rather than of the saints of the Church. It was not in the mind or soul of the Church at large, but only in that of a section that the evolution of theology worked itself out. The laity were passive recipients of the results of the process, but took no active part in it. Theology was not content to be the mere symbolic expression of the mysterious implications of the life of Christ as lived by the members of his mystical body; it had become pure intellectualism, a revealed metaphysic, and nothing else. Doctrines were brought to the criterion of syllogistic reason, of written authority, but not to the criterion of life as lived by the faithful. Hence, the ecumenical council has come to be, to some extent, a sort of theological debating society, with power to impose its technical decisions on the whole Church.

But the mechanism which has been formed in the interests of theology is ready to be used in the interests of Faith and Charity; and to serve as a means for knitting the four corners of the earth together and focussing all the spiritual light and warmth of the



Christian community to a point, and of so kindling the fire that Christ came to send upon earth.

Unless the whole analogy of history deceives us, we may be sure that the last relic of the claim to miraculous gnosis will share the fate of the rest. We can see clearly that theological intellectualism is perishing rapidly before pragmatism; before the co-ordination of the understanding with the whole commonwealth of our spiritual faculties; of the brain, with the heart and affections; of knowledge, with life and action. The Pope as Czar and absolute theocratic Monarch by divine right must, under the logic of the Christian idea, give place to the Pope as really, and not only in name, the "*Servus Servorum Dei*," as the greatest, the first-born among many brethren only because he is the most widely and universally serviceable and ministrant. The growth of organic, as opposed to mechanical, conceptions of society will reconcile his headship with the fundamentally democratic character of the Church, and will relax an impossible centralisation in favour of a freer and more spiritual unity. But all this transformation will depend ultimately and radically on the abandonment of the claim to an oracular power, by which the Pope becomes the mouthpiece of God not *through* the Church, but *to* the Church, and claims her absolute subjection as to God himself. It will depend on the recognition of the entire Christian people as the true and immediate *Vicarius Christi*, the only adequate organ of religious development, as that *orbis terrarum* whose sure verdict is the supreme norm of Faith for the time being, and in whose life and growth the truth of Christ lives and grows from generation to generation, "ever ancient ever new."

So understood, the rule of faith as imposed by the Church will not be a theological system binding the

intellect with all the coercive force of an imperial edict—a stumbling-stone set in the soul's way creating new sins where none had been before; a mental tyranny worse than the moral tyranny of the ancient law. It will be such a rule as Christ himself was when he proclaimed himself the Way, the Truth and the Life, through whom alone men could have access to the Father; when he said, "If any man thirst let him come to me"; "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself"—neither compelling, nor threatening, nor persecuting; but inviting and alluring. For indeed it will be nothing else than the fuller self-revelation of Christ through and in his mystical body. As a doctrinal system addressed to the understanding, its truth will be that of its *religious* values, its correspondence to the needs of spiritual life; and not that of the philosophic, scientific or historical assertions which are but the vehicle of those values, and which but shadow forth in symbol the eternal realities to which the soul is related and adjusted by its religious life. Its truth, even in the spiritual order, will moreover be rather that of a tendency than of a term attained; the truth of a fleeting arrow that makes for a mark infinitely distant. Each new definition and expression of Christ will be true *in direction*, as leaving the last behind and as making for the next—and all in virtue of a process, not of reasoning-out the sign, but of living-out the thing signified. No mental analysis of the philosophical terms of the creed can bring us nearer to God; just as no chemical analysis of bread and wine can teach us anything about the Eucharist.

Prophecy is the most gratuitous form of error; and this Utopian Church is far away as yet,—perhaps infinitely far. Still there is a logic in ideas; and this is what, as far as that logic is concerned, the idea of Catholicism, *i.e.* of institutional Christianity, ought to

lead us to. What, then, are the forces at work to which we may look for such a result?

### § III. THE FUTURE OF "OFFICIALISM"

What is commonly miscalled the conflict between Faith and Science is in truth a conflict between Theology and secular knowledge — philosophic, scientific, and above all historical. This misnomer is due to the theologians themselves, chiefly, who have identified Faith with theological understanding, and who are still unable, or perhaps unwilling, to see that their theology is no longer opposed as inconsistent merely with the passing philosophic and scientific theories of the moment, but as conflicting with the assured discoveries of history. Their great and partially achieved ambition has been to bring their system under the ægis of ecclesiastical infallibility, and to have it canonised as the word of God himself, speaking through his mouth-piece, the Pope of Rome. This system does not even pretend to represent the spontaneous *sensus fidelium*, lay as well as cleric, except in so far as it has been imposed upon the faithful by the Pope, after it has been elaborated by the logic and controversy of the Schools. It is altogether the class-interest of the theologians to explain the Papal teaching-power as charismatic and oracular, and to extend its sphere as widely as possible over the whole realm of theology. Thanks to scholastic logic, their system has been so unified by the co-operative labour of the schools through several centuries that each fragment of the mechanism involves the rest, and it stands or falls as a whole. Sanctioned by Papal authority, it has thus come to be identified with the Christian Faith. The system is constructed of philosophical, scientific and historical assertions, and as such represents a large tract of the total system

of the human understanding. Since coherence and unity characterise this latter, it is plain that, ultimately, theology must claim an indirect jurisdiction over the whole kingdom of human knowledge, as indeed every other science does in a certain measure. If there is any discord between the assertions of theology and those of science or history, one side or the other must eventually give way. When theologians tell us, as they do so often, that the Church is really the friend of science, that there can be no conflict between truth and truth, they do not mean that theology is to give way to science, but the converse. For theology as approved by an infallible oracle is the Word of God ; therefore the rest of knowledge must fall into line with this particular department. By so doing it will be saved many a weary essay of observation and inquiry. Such is their preposterous pretension—the necessary consequence of confounding theology with Faith, the symbolical expression with the eternal realities symbolised. The Joint-Pastoral of the English bishops of 1901 is a fairly barefaced assertion of this claim. Were this claim allowed, the theologians would dominate over, and strangle the intellect of the world, and a bastard intellectualism would be seated in the throne of Faith.

This class-ambition might hope for success if medieval conditions still obtained ; if clerics still held the keys of all knowledge ; if the trivium and quadrivium still covered the whole territory of education. Not that we may throw the reproach of the theologians of to-day back upon their medieval predecessors, whose limitations were not, as now, those of culpable ignorance or lack of open-mindedness, but those of their age. Aquinas has left his *Summa* to posterity, but he has not left his liberal synthetic spirit, his alertness to all that was going on in the minds and



lives of those around him, his faith-begotten fearlessness in appropriating current methods of criticism and investigation.

It is as flattering, and in return re-enforced and sheltered by, the Papal authority, that the theological schools have come to tyrannise over the Church in these evil days. "The Saints shall judge the world," but at present it is the theologians who exercise that office—men whose one-sided knowledge is far more dangerous than absolute ignorance; who fancy themselves capable of universal criticism, in virtue of an imaginary *à priori* short-cut to omniscience, that dispenses them from the tedious methods of study and inquiry in matters of general education.

Owing to an almost Spartan discipline and rigorous centralisation there is not now much room for overt theological dissension within the Church. The dissident is *ipso facto* considered to be a bad Catholic or none at all. The old conflict of School with School—that last relic of intellectual vitality—is to give way to universal Thomism—for theology is faith, and faith must be one. But in dragging Faith down to the level of a mere department of philosophical and historical knowledge, differing from other departments of the same only in being attained through a miraculously guaranteed revelation; in giving over one section of the field of the human understanding to the jurisdiction of a theological oracle, and the rest of the same field to the jurisdiction of reason and criticism; in claiming a necessary coherence between the results of these two separate systems of government, to be secured, in case of seeming conflict, by the subjection of the latter to the former; in all this theology has brought itself and its own theory of Papal Infallibility (by which the Pope is made a

theological oracle) into jeopardy. For now the theological oracle standing on the same plane as the philosopher or historian, and dealing with the same problems, will have his claim to a miraculous gnosis subjected to experimental test; and the result will grow daily more apparent. Theology will have to support its pretensions by ignoring or denying truths more evident than those on which its own claims to supremacy are rested. For eventually it rests those claims on an ingenious apologetic substructure, made up of facts and arguments by no means so unquestionable as those which it will have to deny daily.

This quandary was inevitable from the time, long centuries back, when theology was first credited with possessing in the finite order, not a mere practical truth, but an infallible ontological truth. The theologians hope to maintain their contention against the onslaught of criticism, least of all, by a system of darning and patching-up their positions so as to avoid the scandal of too flagrant a defiance of common sense. Rarely and reluctantly a compromise is made on this point or on that; or awkward theses are quietly let fall into oblivion, at all events for the time being. Their main hope lies in bringing their whole system directly or indirectly under the sanction of the Papal oracle, and so binding it upon the consciences of those, at least, who accept their theory of ecclesiastical inerrancy as of Faith. Those outside this faithful circle are dealt with by means of uncomplimentary rhetoric rather than by reason; and this with a view more to the reassurance and satisfaction of believers than to the conviction of the reprobates themselves, whose blindness is ascribed, on *à priori* grounds, to a mixture of intellectual pride, worldliness and sensuality, vices from which the theologically orthodox are therefore assumed to be perfectly free. Liberalism and

luxury, we are assured by the aforesaid Joint-Pastoral of 1901 and by Pope Leo XIII. in his adoption of the same, go hand in hand.

But since a clear perception of the numerous points in which sacred and secular science are in opposition may strain all but the strongest faith in the former, and may thus lead to the criticism of its pretensions, it becomes a matter of sovereign importance to suppress the knowledge of such oppositions as far as possible. In a Catholic age, in a Catholic country, and by aid of the secular arm, such suppression was fairly possible, at least for the time being. Whether in the long run an open sewer may prove less deadly than a closed is matter for dispute. With the blind conservatism of their class, and indeed appealing to medieval authorities without the slightest allowance for changed conditions, the "officials" still hope, by the old-world coercive and oppressive methods, by the *Imprimatur*, and the *Index*, and the Inquisition, to keep from the faithful that flood of growing information and knowledge which surges up and pours round those worm-eaten leaky barriers, that even in their best days had not been proof against such forces. The spread of information, be it good or evil, is as irresistible as the incoming tide, nor is it in the power of any Pope Canute to say: "Hitherto shalt thou come and no further." Nay, the longer the waters are pent up, the more destructively will they break forth at last. Instead of diligently preparing an ark of refuge, the officials are busied only in proving *à priori* the impossibility of a deluge. Instead of securing their authority, which is in question, they use it to settle that question. Of a sound scientific criticism of the state of affairs between the Church and the Age they seem as incapable as schoolboys. The Devil, the Freemasons, the loss of the Temporal Power, are supposed to explain

all the evils of the day. That clerics may be ultimately responsible for the evils of Freemasonry ; that the desire or the possession of Temporal power may be answerable for more harm to souls than its loss ; that the Devil is a needless hypothesis where natural explanations abound—of all this there is no suspicion. All the rights are on one side ; all the wrongs on the other.

And their practical methods and remedies are as naïve as their diagnosis. For the only method they understand or believe in is that of “protection,” of securing an artificial environment, instead of developing that inward, vital, self-adaptiveness which enables men to live in their natural environment. This educational principle has been inherited from pre-scientific days. It is plain of course that some degree of protection is needed that the soul may not be taxed above its strength ; but all in excess of that is hurtful and weakening ; and the whole aim should be to cultivate as complete an independence of such external props and crutches as possible. But for the ecclesiastical mind the means has come to be regarded as an end in itself, both in mental and moral training, in the cultivation of faith and of virtue. Segregation from the ordinary conditions of life ; ignorance of the very existence of temptations is considered, as a permanent vocation, the most favourable spiritual environment, and still worse, it is considered the aptest preparation for those who will afterwards be flung out into the midst of temptations that they have never heard of, much less learnt to understand and deal with. In her ecclesiastical seminaries ; in her convents and monasteries ; in her clerical and religious schools for the young ; in the most general as well as in the most particular exercise of her “spiritual direction” and formation, the “official” Church of to-day has no other



idea than that of protection, absolute and unqualified as far as it can be possibly carried out—no suspicion that under this unnatural system not only individuals but the Catholic body as a whole (witness France to-day) is becoming steadily enfeebled and emasculated, both mentally and morally,—salt that has lost its savour, incapable of seasoning the world ; a light hidden under a bushel ; a city buried in a valley.

It is, however, becoming daily more impossible to carry out this protective method successfully ; and yet the officials and theologians have no other hope of maintaining their position. Except for the disingenuous and futile little patchings and darnings aforesaid, they make no effort to deal with the problems of criticism save by refusing to look at them and forbidding others to look, and by canonising this run-away policy as “Faith.” The only place where “protection” obtains at all successfully is just where it should be least needed and where it works most disastrously—in clerical seminaries where men are professedly being trained to assist the laity to maintain their orthodoxy against dangers of which these clerics themselves know nothing, thanks to the Index.

Over the laity themselves, whose danger is presumably greater, these “protective” methods are losing hold every day ; partly because they are unworkable ; chiefly because in an age of freedom they cannot appeal seriously to the conscience. That it is a *sin* to read prohibited books is for many an “unreal” statement, even if “notionally” accepted. It cannot be a sin to live rationally like other good people ; and when a religion defies practical reasonableness beyond a certain extent, it is felt to cut away its own basis and is ignored. When we say to non-Catholics that Catholicism is reasonable, we mean reasonable all round and in a sense allowed by non-Catholics. If in

order to be good Catholics lay-folk may not read the literature of their country ; or mix with its universities ; or converse with its intelligence ; or enter into its general life ; if they must live in a little Goshen apart, the reasons will need to be very plain to common-sense if the prohibition is to be at all effectual. Unintelligent obedience is born hard and dies soon.

The best hope of the official position at present lies in the large number of good people, lay and cleric, who still sincerely believe it would be a sin even to criticise it ; and who devote all their earnestness and goodness to its support. It has, no doubt, other supporters whose motives are not so respectable, whose good-faith is not so unquestionable ; and a large crowd whose attitude is determined by pure ignorance, habit and indifference. All these offer a wall of passive resistance to the inroads of criticism that may hold out for many a long year, and thus give time for the new Catholicism so to develop itself within the bosom of the old that the transition may be accomplished insensibly. This will mean the spread among Catholics of saner conceptions of the nature and function of the Church ; the slow formation of a "psychological climate" which will quietly stifle officialism by rendering its pretensions wordy, unreal, and ineffectual ; preoccupation about practical moral and social rather than theological problems ; the appropriation of the ecclesiastical organism to the service of charity. The new will quietly undermine the old and supplant it, as manhood supplants childhood with its thoughts and words and ways. The only force that can and will effect this transition is the force of Christ's spirit spread abroad in the hearts of the faithful, and working itself out with an irresistible power of expansion that avenges every delay with an outburst of multiplied energy.

In all this there is no prediction of a day that has not yet dawned on our horizon, but only an assumption that processes already at work will run their course. The sole means upon which officialism relies are palpably failing it every day ; whereas the evangelical leaven is making its presence felt in so many independent ways and in so many disconnected quarters as to prove that its revived activity is conditioned rather by the nature of the times than by the feeble efforts of isolated individuals.

But before we pass on to consider that problem of the Ethics of Conformity to which all this inquiry is directed, we must say a word as to the relation of Roman Catholicism to other forms of Christianity, and of Christianity to the other religions of the world.

#### § IV. CATHOLICISM AND HETERODOXY

Not only Polytheism, but Monolatry has become unthinkable for the modern mind ; not only do we refuse to worship many gods but we deny the very existence of more than one. So with religions ; it may be difficult to decide which, if any, of the number is the true one ; it may be held that tolerance is therefore a duty ; it may be said that the true religion is variously adaptable within limits ; but as God is one and humanity is one, there can be only one true religion. In claiming to be the true religion the Roman Church claims consistently to be the one and only, the universal and exclusive religion : *Extra ecclesiam salus nulla*. This claim has received certain, even official, sophistications and dilutions in modern times which would surprise some of the ancient Fathers. *Dii gentium daemonia* (our neighbours' gods are devils) was the view of Hebrew theology on its way from monolatry to monotheism, before it had courage to deny

all reality to the gentle divinities and to call them mere stocks and stones ; nor were the early Christian Fathers much more lenient in their judgment of non-Christian religions—not to speak of Christian heresies. All religions alike were regarded as mainly of preternatural origin, as revealed by oracles, as abounding in marvels—not as we now regard them, who see in them only the results of man's feeble religious sense struggling for expression in the midst of ignorance, corruption and blinding passion. If preternatural products, then, since they were not from the one true God who could not contradict himself, they were from the devil. Even where higher forms of pagan religion partly coincided with the Christian, this was ascribed to the craft of the devil dealing in spurious imitations, very much as Anglo-Catholic Romanisms are now explained by certain Roman controversialists. The first Christian missionary efforts were dictated by a laudable desire to deliver the vast majority of mankind from direct subjection to the Devil, and from inevitable damnation for all eternity. Heretics were in even a worse case than the heathen.

This was the original reading of “*Extra ecclesiam salus nulla*” ; and *ex hypothesi* it was the true one. It is only because the hypothesis was wrong that we have now to express the truth more accurately ; nor have we perhaps yet reached its final expression. When, however, it is refined away so as to mean that no man can be saved who is not in “good faith,” it is robbed of all special content and becomes a blatant truism. What makes it a specially Catholic maxim is a specially Catholic meaning—that to belong to the original and universal Christian society is an essential point of normal Christianity—in this sense it is denied by many who profess Christianity. Each sect is necessarily exclusive in claiming to be the true and the



truest religion ; but not in the sense of denying to Catholics or to others any *essential* condition of salvation peculiar to itself. Catholics make communion with themselves an essential, not merely an advantage. How then is the Catholic to look upon other Christian bodies and on other non-Christian religions ? What is he to think of the six-sevenths of the seeming religious life of the world that lies beyond that of his Church ? Must he call it death ?

Here again, in these days in which that outlying region is being explored, understood, and made known to all, the crude official view of the matter ceases to carry conviction to healthily constituted minds—even when it does not cause them to revolt against what seems to them an unworthy conception of God's providence and goodness towards every human creature that he has made. In the first vigour of Christianity, when it bade fair to sweep all before it, and to spread over the whole world as rapidly as its flame was then spreading over the dry stubble-fields it had first found to hand, such a view of other religions did not imply so hopeless a pessimism as it does now that we know experimentally, if not also *à priori*, that Christianity, though an ideal for the whole world, can never be the attainment of more than a small section. The same development of the Christian spirit itself, which makes intolerable the Calvinistic belief in the election by divine favouritism of a small handful from the reprobate multitudes of humanity, makes the official conception of Catholicism as the one and only religion equally intolerable.

Claims that do not find a congenial psychological climate are as idle as seeds without soil, or a ship in a desert. In this as in other matters "officials" will not, perhaps cannot, recede or eat their words ; but they will weary of speaking to deaf ears ; they will

lose the courage, the habit, and at last the very power of uttering what has come to be nonsense, whatever truth it may once have enshrined.

In its present shattered condition Christendom may be considered roughly as consisting of the Roman Communion, the separated Eastern Churches, and the Reformation religions; of these latter the Church of England stands apart from the more strictly and avowedly Protestant denominations, in her adhesion to the principles of early Catholicism. For our present purpose we may leave the Eastern Churches aside as offering an instance of arrested development. The external circumstances which have caused this arrest, and have prevented them from working out the Catholic idea to its logical consequences, as Rome has done, have no bearing on our inquiry. Like Rome, these Churches have tried to fight the world with its own methods; to oppose a theocratic polity to secular polities; to set Church and State against one another on the same plane, with the same weapons, to contest the same territory, or at least to effect a partition; but unlike Rome they have been worsted and brought under, whereas she still hopes for victory. To a large measure they keep the Christian spirit alive in many millions of their adherents, but can do little to develop it, as it can be developed only by the co-operative labour of a free and living association. Their framework and organisation are so largely dependent for their maintenance on external and secular support, so little on their own inward vitality, that it is doubtful whether a release from captivity would not mean the immediate disintegration of these Churches; whether they be not held together by their very bonds and fetters. As regards spiritual and religious liberty of any kind their notions are those of the seventh or eighth century. The ecumenical councils of the past are imposed on

the present and future as a final, decisive, all-sufficient rule; nor is there enough interest or movement of thought in religious matters to make this tyranny felt as such. It may well be that this theological petrification liberates the Christian spirit in healthier directions. When theological interest is awake and the air filled with flying anathemas; when to be intellectually sound about the latest problem is made a condition of faith and salvation, the inward reality of religion is likely to suffer; whereas if theology is recognised as a sealed book, men can afford to lay it aside as a matter that can be taken for granted without examination.

Turning now to the rest of Christendom: in Rome we see the principle of authority carried to the contempt of liberty; in pure Protestantism the principle of liberty carried to the contempt of authority; in Anglicanism we see an ineffectual attempt to realise a *via media*. But the solution is yet to seek.

No movement (*e.g.*, Christianity or Catholicism) understands itself at the beginning. It is inspired by an instinct or spirit whose significance is unfolded gradually, but is at first apprehended inadequately and often quite falsely. This is eminently true of Protestantism, which took over from Rome much that it should have left behind, and has had gradually to discard. The implications of what it thus took over were enough to condemn it and force it back to Rome again, had not its spirit been stronger than its logic, the implicit subconscious thought than the explicit and conscious.

One of its great justifications was the excessive externalising of religion by which faith came to stand for correct theology, holiness for a routine of practices, the Church for a polity of a purely secular type governed by methods of moral, and indirectly physical,

coercion—a mere terrorism, a spiritual Leviathan. It is easier to see that a mistake has been made than to fix the exact point of bifurcation where the path was missed; and often simpler to go back to the very beginning and work things out afresh. The Church of the New Testament and the Roman Church of the sixteenth century were palpably different; the purity of the latter questionable, that of the former unquestionable. The former therefore should be taken as the criterion of the latter. This was the plausible but crude solution of Protestantism. Crude in its unconsciousness that the New Testament itself represented a development, and not the first purity of the spirit of Christ. Crude, again, in accepting that view of New Testament inspiration which rested on just the same Church-authority as many dogmas which Protestantism rejected as unbiblical. Crude, most of all, in not discerning that the Catholic and institutional phase of Christianity was the natural and necessary issue of the charismatic and inspirational; that in the nature of things the latter could not be made permanent and universal; that its beneficence could only be preserved to the world in an association whose gathered and co-operant energies should compensate for the evanescent forces of original enthusiasm. God indeed must be worshipped in spirit and in truth, not in mere externalities of profession and observance which become superstitions as soon as they cease to minister effectually to inwardness; but inwardness is not a heroic degree of enthusiasm and inspiration,—not a divine “possession” under which the soul is a passive vehicle of supernatural activity; it is an active exercise of intelligence and of free-will whereby the soul strives to *raise itself* God-wards, to conform itself “to the pattern showed it on the Mount,” to make itself what it was made by grace in those brief Tabor



moments of illumination. Forgetfulness of this distinction is at the root of that fakirish fanatical revivalism, emotionalism, sentimentalism, which is the *summum bonum* of the lower forms of Protestantism. To revive the original outpourings of the Spirit is not the aim of the Christian religion, but to profit by them and to apply them. It is no longer by way of infection from individual enthusiasts that religion is spread abroad normally, but by the *consensus fidelium*, i.e. by the spirit resident in the whole body and revealed through its appointed organs. This does not exclude the prophetic office altogether; at times and in individuals the old fire breaks out in less or greater measure. But the Church-method supplies for the prophetic, and makes us, to a large extent, independent of so incalculable and uncertain a system. The true preacher,—the man who speaks from some inward spirit, is a rarity; but every priest can instruct us, and tell us what the Church teaches and believes. Protestantism really makes inspiration and spiritual originality a condition of being saved; to be converted is to go through a quasi-ecstatic experience. This, however, is not demanded by inwardness and reality; and it carries the revulsion against mechanism and externality to a false extreme. It explains the multiplication and speedy extinction of sects which accompany the Protestant movement. Enthusiasm cannot, like steam, be caged in a mechanism, or be produced at will. After all it is not *life*; it is only such a warmth as the brood-hen gives to her eggs, i.e. a condition of after-life.

*Extra Ecclesiam salus nulla*, isolated from Christian Society no man is safe—this is what Protestantism ignores in principle. It looks to the New Testament, i.e. to the record of the earliest and least developed phase of the Christian Spirit rather than to the present

phase for its rule of Faith; and this, because that record is held to be inspired. It looks for a charisma of interpretation in the individual who reads the Bible. It looks for a charisma of prophecy in its preachers and ministers. It has no belief in the collective mind of the Church; in the natural authority of the universal *consensus* as being the social standard of right thinking, right feeling, right speaking and right acting concerning the spirit of Christ spread abroad in the hearts of the faithful; as being the corrective of individual eccentricity and fanaticism; as being the pre-condition of sane liberty, originality and personality. An individual who is divinely inspired or illuminated, who is taught directly by God, needs no school or Church to correct and judge of his utterances, to "try his spirit." If he ministers the word to others less favoured, he draws them to God through himself and not through the whole Christian people.<sup>1</sup> Not the community but, at most, this prophet or that, mediates between God and the soul.

But analogously with God's whole economy in the government of man, according to which men are drawn together and united into ever higher and more complex groupings by their needs and insufficiencies, he has willed that the Christian religion should be a means of furthering spiritual union, and not of

<sup>1</sup> The same objection may be urged against the narrower official explanation of the Papal teaching-power, which ascribes it to a personal charisma resident in the Pope as heir to Peter's personal gifts in a certain measure; and not simply to the whole Church as finding voice in the Pope. Paradox though it be, this is the last relic of Protestantism which stands in the way of the absolute Catholicising of the Church and the complete victory of institutional over individualistic and charismatic Christianity. Catholic controversialists recognise this paradox when they say that each Protestant claims as great a charisma for himself or for his minister as Catholics claim for the Pope alone. They have many Popes; we but one.

multiplying dissensions. Provisionally indispensable at first, the charismatic economy led necessarily to dissensions that called for the Catholicising of Christianity—for the storing up in an institution, the vesting in the whole community, of the fruits of that brief period of creative enthusiasm. In violently attempting to revive that period, Protestantism has reproduced only the disadvantages of its decadence—the dissensions and confusions incident to the enfeeblement of the waning spirit—not the vigour of its prime when, possessed in a measure to overwhelm the personality of its instruments, the Spirit spoke with the same voice in all. For inspirations accord only as they are deeper and fuller and purer from admixture of individualism.

This seems to be the fundamental misunderstanding into which Protestantism was led by its laudable revulsion against externalism, its thirst for inwardness and more immediate communion between the soul and God. Herein it fails “to discern the Lord’s body.” Needless to say we are not considering the outward occasions and circumstances of the revolt from Rome. There were bad men with base motives at work on both sides, who hindered the good men on both sides from coming to a peaceful understanding. Like many another heresy, Protestantism is simply the exaggeration and over-emphasis of a long-neglected truth, and the sin lies at the door, not only of those who went out, but still more of those who drove them out—of corrupt Popes, Bishops and Priests.

In setting up the Bible rather than the living Church of the present as an infallible rule of theological orthodoxy the early reformers misunderstood their own spirit—first in accepting the current valuation of theological truth which viewed it as adequate philosophically, scientifically and historically in the

realms of human understanding ; not as merely symbolic of the absolute order, and as possessing only regulative and practical truth in the finite order. Secondly, in accepting the purely ecclesiastical and non-Scriptural doctrine of Scriptural infallibility. Thirdly, in denying life and development to the Christian spirit, and in making of the Past an inflexible rule for the Present and Future.

Revolting against the abuse of living authority they denied its rights altogether, and fell back on the graven letter of the Past. Against one infallible theological oracle, they set up another every bit as tyrannical, though less decisive and intelligible. It was only the eyes of the sixteenth century, long accustomed to scholastic spectacles, that could have viewed the New Testament as the lineal ancestor of the *Summa Theologica*, and have sought in it a divinely revealed philosophy or history instead of a prophetic vision woven of, but not vouching for, current beliefs chosen to be the visible garment of invisible mysteries.

Once more : in their revolt against the superstitious use of symbolism and sacramentalism the reformers have been driven to a violent and unnatural rationalism in worship, that tends to take Christianity out of the category of religion altogether, and to confine it to that of ethical philosophy. The alliance between body and soul ; sense and spirit ; feeling and will ; imagination and reason, is inseparable in human life. The claims of each side of our nature, both inward and outward, may be sometimes hard to apportion ; and it is always the lower that encroaches on the other if unwatched. Still, the Stoicism or Puritanism, that denies the lower its due, is no wise friend to the interests of the spirit. Were man's spirit pure understanding it could be appealed to only, and could utter itself only, in that language of prose which is the



algebra of thought, the keyboard of our mental mechanism. Such a view of man's spirit is really inconsistent with the Protestant's over-valuation of enthusiasm and emotional states; nor is it consistent with that use of verse and melody and of impassioned poetic utterance, which he adopts so successfully at times in the interests of religion. The soul has countless experiences of which the highest defy expression in terms of the bare understanding and of verbal algebra; nor can they be induced by appeals of articulate speech. Music, form, colour, movement, art of every description put souls *en rapport* with one another in matters where language is helpless. A look, a smile, a tone of voice convey what volumes could not utter. No religion that practically ignores this point of psychology can be widely effective in fusing the spiritual energies of different nations and ages together into one great soul-compelling force. By her ritual and symbolism the Catholic religion finds a fuller vehicle for expressing and communicating those mystical states, begotten by the soul's contact with eternal realities, than words alone could ever supply. Abuses there have been and are in abundance; continual weeding and pruning is necessary. But a ceremony is not idle the moment it loses its original clear meaning for the understanding. It may yet appeal to our sense of fellowship and union with the distant and the past, or to still deeper emotions. Sound and sense are commonly opposed; but mere sound may have a deeper sense than words can well carry; and the mode may have more value than the matter. Ceremonial Puritanism is counter to the whole spirit and principle of the Incarnation. If the Logos—the Idea, the Word—is to tabernacle amongst men, it must be made flesh and translated into the language of the senses and imagination. God as a

spirit must be worshipped in spirit and in truth, and without the quickening spirit the mere flesh profiteth nothing; but except we eat the flesh of the Son of Man we cannot partake of His spirit. Unclothed abstractions may be the food of the "spirits of just men made perfect" in some other world than this; but Christ came to call, not the just—not the intellectual aristocracy—but sinners, to repentance.

Thus in its revolt against authority carried to the contempt of liberty, Protestantism has carried liberty to the contempt of authority. Its history has been one of disintegration, of divisions and sub-divisions—all the logical outcome of its individualism; of its rejection of institutional Christianity; of its vain hope to restore the charismatic phase.

Anglicanism, that most illogical and impossible of compromises, hardly imaginable outside England, must be acknowledged as a characteristic product of that English practical sense which is revolted by the counter-fanaticisms of authority and liberty; and laudably, though vainly, strives after a *via media*. Instead, however, of seeking a higher synthesis through a criticism of the fundamental assumptions on both sides, it rests content with a sort of adjustable syncretism of elements borrowed from one side and the other, putting a little more of this in the right scale, or a little less of that in the left, whenever the balance is seriously disturbed. It treats the matter as more or less of a mystery, as a truth that is buried inaccessibly between two contrary assertions. Catholicism up to a certain undefined point, but not too much; and Protestantism in like manner. The Bible only; yes, but the Fathers also. The premisses of Catholicism, but not the conclusions. Logically this is absurd; but practically it is very sane in so far as it really means that the premisses are half-truths; that they contain elements

of truth inaccurately stated and may not therefore be used in argument till their sense has been more precisely defined than is at present possible. The aspiration of Anglicanism is at least to be respected, however its failure as a *via media* may be deplored. At present its condition is that of a compound of most unstable equilibrium which a mere touch may suddenly resolve into a number of quite heterogeneous and mutually repulsive elements.

Now it is by the sword of authority that Christendom has been hewn in pieces, and till that sword is thrust back into its scabbard reunion is impossible. But "authority" in what sense? A book, an expert, an academy, a school-master, a police-magistrate are all authorities; but in different senses. For our present purpose it will suffice to distinguish "official" authority, which belongs to a man in virtue of his position in the social organism, from "personal," which derives from his inherent gifts and qualifications. The government of society in external matters requires certain fictions, such as that "the King can do no wrong." The scoundrel or fool in office must be treated as a superior by men better and abler than himself. In the charismatic phase of Christianity all Church authority was "personal." Christ Himself taught with authority, and not as the scribes or "officials," *i.e.* He taught as the prophets taught. The "official" apologists nowadays measure His authority by their own claims, as if it had been of the same kind. They present Him to us as first proving His office by signs and wonders, and then in virtue of *His office* "imposing" otherwise incredible doctrines upon His hearers. This is not the prophetic and personal method; nor was it Christ's. To the officials of His own day He said: "A faithless and perverse generation seek after a sign," *i.e.* after external credentials in proof of a man's office as God's

messenger, "but no sign shall be given to them but the sign of Jonas the prophet ; for as Jonas *preached*," etc., *i.e.* His doctrine and spirit was to be its own proof, like that of the ancient prophets. Neither the Baptist, chief of prophets, nor Isaiah, nor Jeremiah wrought miracles to prove their divine right to utter theological riddles ; but the spirit that was within them and burned in their words sought out, evoked and kindled the same spirit wherever it was latent and potential in their hearers. Only those for whom prophecy is degraded to the level of soothsaying, demand proofs of that magical power which they suppose to be correlative and connected with magical knowledge. Christ treated the demand as indicating spiritual deadness and insensibility ; nor is there any reason to suppose that the Apostles needed miracles as proof of His prophetic authority, seeing that they had acknowledged the Baptist without such credentials, and had probably believed and followed Christ before He began to work miracles. If the true prophet as such has any miraculous gift, it is simply that of a direct power over souls, a power of producing irresistible conviction, and of "suggestion." But, though extraordinary, such power is in no way inexplicable or without parallel in ordinary life. As in the commerce of intellect with intellect, a word which means nothing for the uneducated effects a sudden synthesis in a mind duly prepared, so with the far more complex states of spiritual enthusiasm and inspiration ; some souls are as green-wood, others, as dry. These will be set blazing by a spark ; those will be proof against a furnace. Thus it was with that fire which Christ kindled on earth. The spirit that possessed Him absolutely and in its greatest fulness was already abroad in varying measures from the beginning ; had found ever clearer and less inadequate



utterance in the prophets of Israel, and quite recently in the last of them—John the Baptist, whose mission was to prepare an acceptable people for its plenary manifestation in the Son of Man. Men were drawn to Christ as like to like, and in the measure of their likeness—in the measure that their spirit responded to His. “My sheep hear my voice: they know me and I know them; a stranger they will not follow.” This was the secret of His pastoral authority—spiritual and not official. He would not coerce the spirit by any but spiritual motives; He would not cast Himself down from the pinnacle to prove Himself authorised to drive souls that would not be led. Faith is nothing but the response of the “*anima naturaliter Christiana*” to Christ; its recognition of Him as explaining its vague needs and instincts, as revealing it to itself; as possessing in fulness the spirit which it possesses in part. Only the Christlike can receive Christ; “No man can say: ‘The Lord Jesus’ save in the Holy Ghost.” If we are to credit our “official” apologists, Christ had no direct power of spiritual conviction, no prophetic power over souls; but, like Moses proving to Pharaoh by victorious conflict with the magicians the superiority of his own claims, He had first to convince the Apostles by signs and wonders that He was sent by the Lord of Physical Nature, ere He could, as a theological oracle, impose His doctrine on their reluctant and unsympathetic minds. And it is in this wise that they conceive the teaching-authority of the Council or the Pope. It is explained as a charisma attached to the office, irrespective of the qualifications, spiritual, moral or intellectual, of the person who holds the office; as availing *ex opere operato* like the sacramental powers of the priest; as binding with the force of a law, not with the power of a spirit; as coercive through external sanctions, not through inherent cog-

ency. All that needs proof is the legitimacy of the officer's position ; that proved, his word becomes law. And ultimately his credentials as a "Divine Teacher" are resolved into those miracles wrought by Christ whose delegate he is shown to be through Apostolic succession.<sup>1</sup>

In virtue of this office, therefore, not in virtue of sanctity or learning, a certain body of men are supposed in certain legal conditions to define theological truths (*i.e.* philosophical, scientific and historical truths connected with Christianity) infallibly, so as to command intellectual assent under pain of sin ; and in this they are supposed to teach in the name of, and in the same way as, Christ, who taught, not as the Scribes and Canon-lawyers *from authorities*, but "with authority."

This is a view of the matter that will be starved and chilled out of existence as time goes on ; it will simply lapse like other unheeded claims, such as those of the Papal Monarchy, which have never formally been withdrawn, but which would fall on modern ears as mere ravings. "The Saints," not the theologians, nor even the bishops, "shall judge the earth" ; none can understand Christ or preach Him truly who are not filled with His spirit ; for He is a Way and a Life, and not a system of theology ; His truth is a trueness of action and living. No office carries sanctity among its rights and properties ; no solemnities of election or consecration can make a man a good Christian, without which he lacks the first condition of a sound judgment as to the essence and nature of Christianity. Even if Faith be identified with theological orthodoxy, a council of bishops is not *ipso facto* a council of com-

<sup>1</sup> It may be noted that certain evidence tends to show that in the earliest times bishops were ordained by presbyters, and that the very theory of Episcopal succession is of far more recent growth. (Sohm. *Kirchenrecht*, 24.)

petent theologians; official appointment will give brains and learning as little as it will give sanctity. If then in the absence of the natural conditions their decision is not only competent but infallible it can only be through miraculous intervention—as indeed the “officials” maintain it is.

Is there then any view of the teaching-authority of the Church and of the official *Ecclesia Docens* more reconcilable with what is likely to be accepted by outsiders, and yet consistent with Catholicism, *i.e.* with institutionised Christianity?

We have already suggested such a view, first: in insisting on the difference between Faith and the doctrinal system in which it is expressed or embodied in the understanding. We have said that the religious value or truth of such doctrines was to be distinguished from their philosophical, scientific or historical (*i.e.* their theological) value in the finite order; that the former is only a practical or regulative truth in the finite order, a guide to action and life; and possesses ontological value, on which that practical value is founded, only in the absolute order which it symbolises. Hence their possible failure as truths of the natural order does not prejudice the religious value of doctrines so explained. Secondly: understanding by Faith the spirit of Christ, which has been committed to the Church's keeping, the direct matter of her preaching or prophetic office is this same spirit of Christ and of Him crucified—the doctrinal embodiment thereof being simply involved in this direct matter, but not being an independent or more principal matter, as the “official” view assumes. Thirdly: we said that while in the charismatic phase of Christianity this spirit was expanded and developed by means of prophets endowed with that higher degree of enthusiasm called inspiration, in the institution, which in the nature of things took

the place of that essentially transitory dispensation, the same work was carried on through the entire social co-operation of that institution which became, as it were, a corporate prophet, a collective heir to the dying spirit of prophecy. We saw how, in fact, this "institutionising" process grew out of the need of "trying the spirits" when, owing to the enfeeblement and admixture of inspiration, prophet contradicted prophet, and the controversy had to be referred to a group of witnesses who claimed a higher degree of charisma; and how the differences of these led to the recognition of yet higher tribunals, till we came to the infallible pope; and how in the course of this process the natural principle of "a multitude of counsellors" was silently acknowledged and applied to check and criticise the pretensions to charismatic authority on the part of individuals and classes, and the way quietly prepared for the recognition of the Catholic truth that it is in the whole body of the faithful who live the Christian life that the spirit of Christ—the art of Christianity—dwells and works itself out; and how the hierarchic system, thus incidentally formed, serves to bring the constituent atoms of Christ's mystical body into effective connection and to render their co-operation in this work of spiritual development more practical and fruitful. What then have "officials," the "Ecclesia Docens," the pope and bishops, to do with this prophetic work which belongs to that whole Church in whom and through whom Christ still teaches the world in the same spirit and manner in which He taught when on earth, *i.e.* with the authority of an inward spirit and the soul-compelling inherent power of a living word and of a speaking life—"not as the scribes," not as the apologists or theologians?

In every nation or society there is, we have said, a certain public mind, opinion, sentiment and spirit,



which is the product of its collective life in the past, and the rule of thought and feeling by which the defective eccentricity of the individual must be corrected through education before he is able or entitled to criticise, improve on, and further that general mind. It is by the accumulated and selected improvements of such individuals that the public mind is developed. Those rare men who comprehend, and in some degree go beyond, the spirit of their day drag the multitudes after them, and become the teachers of their teacher—and yet only so far as this collective teacher is willing to be taught; for, in a way, it is the supreme judge and critic. Before the tribunal of the whole institution the spirit of the individual prophet is tried before it is accepted and listened to; it is tested in some way by the rule of the Past; not as though the Past were final, but because the true development may not contradict the Past, may not be out of harmony with its spirit and principles, but must explain and justify it, while transcending it.

Thus it is that Christianity is developed in the life of the whole Christian Church (abstracting for the moment from its formal hierarchic organisation). The *Sensus fidelium* is the rule to which each individual must be conformed, and by which even the prophets must be judged when they claim to have fully assimilated and transcended that rule in any particular point, or to have experienced and found expression for some new development and manifestation of the spirit of Christ. It is to the test of “*id quod traditum est*,” applied not exclusively but inclusively, that they must be brought. And by prophets in this loose sense we mean the great Saints, Reformers, Preachers and unofficial teachers of the Church through whose personal and quasi-charismatic gifts the tone and content of Christianity has been slowly enriched, and the general

soul of the Church enlarged and strengthened. Great as they are, these master-Christians, yet the whole mystical body to which they minister is greater. If they give to it, it is because they have first received of it, and by its judgment their offering must be valued and rated. It alone is the true and adequate *Christi Vicarius* — the “institutionised” Peter — in whom Christ’s life and teaching are continued and expanded. Of this unofficial *Ecclesia Docens* every one is a member so far as by a Christian life he contributes to the formation and constitution of its public opinion and sentiment; and he is a subject in so far as he is himself formed and educated by that same rule.

But within itself, in the manner already explained, this Church has developed a hierarchic system of officers, without which its social life would be simply that of an amorphous crowd of units. Through this institutional organism its energies are concentrated, directed, economised. The differentiations of lay and cleric, of lower and higher clergy, of religious and secular, all are products of the Church’s self-development, and all are simply subservient to the deepening of the spirit of Christ in the heart, life and understanding of the faithful. But the Church is greater than what she has made, greater than the episcopate or the pope. What they do officially they do simply in her name, as her servants, under her judgment. It is she who baptizes and ordains and sacrifices and prays and preaches; and these functions are valid only as the work and expression of her spirit. Without some such machinery and officialdom the Church would fall to pieces like an overgrown amoeba, for lack of knitting together. The development of such a skeletal, muscular, nervous and circulatory system within the formless pulp and plasm of her original condition was a necessity of life. Protestantism allows

the need of some such organism, but denies that the Catholic form is solely valid. We must concede, in deference to history, that it was not framed at a stroke by the word of Christ, and that it grew naturally under stress of the conflict between the Church and her environment. Yet as the spontaneous creation of the united Christian people, the episcopal system has an indirectly divine character that must be lacking to systems since elaborated by any separated group of Christians. If the claim of Apostolic succession as commonly understood be questionable, that of general ecclesiastical continuity remains unassailable. If it is only as being the actions of the whole Church that eucharists, baptisms, ordinations and absolutions are also the actions of Christ, whose spirit is resident in her whole collectivity, yet it is for her to fix the conditions of validity, to determine what and whose acts shall truly be accounted hers. That she might have determined things otherwise in other circumstances may be granted, but that having determined them, she must develop on the same lines, seems equally evident to common-sense.

Officialism is necessary to an institution such as the Church, just because the supply of inherent gifts and talents cannot be commanded any more than can the weather; the really apt man cannot be always forthcoming in the right place at the right moment—a man namely whose own personal spirit is representative of the Church's. But delegates and ambassadors who will mechanically say and do in the name of the Church what is appointed to them to say or do, can be more readily provided. In these, internal qualifications are congruous indeed, but not necessary for the validity of their acts, which are valid as being those of the whole body governed by the general mind and will. The abuse known as "sacerdotalism" rises

from the attribution to officials of a certain *spiritual* superiority merely in virtue of their office, as though the value of those acts they perform, merely in the name and through the power of the whole Church, derived from some inherent quality of their souls raising them above the laity in spiritual dignity—a quality, however, which guarantees no observable elevation of intelligence or moral character, and yet is supposed to justify sundry intrusions of the clergy into the speculative and practical domains of life, as though they were endowed with a sort of supernatural competence working independently of natural means. Theoretically the least degree of *gratia gratum faciens*, *i.e.* of charity, is more spiritually estimable than the greatest superabundance of *gratia gratis data*, *i.e.* of charismatic gifts, like miracle and prophecy. The graces of ordination are surely less even than these latter, since to work mechanically as the officer of an institution, according to prescribed rites and words, is less than to be the active and conscious instrument of the Holy Ghost. Yet the possessor of these most modest trusts which, as constituting spiritual superiority, are considered *a fortiori* to give a right of control in things merely intellectual and profane, has been exploited in the struggle for pence and power in a manner that has often put the Church under the feet of her own servants and messengers—*Servi dominati sunt nobis*.

If then a certain section of officialdom—the pope and episcopate—has come to be entrusted with a certain doctrinal power, and to be called in some special sense the official *Ecclesia Docens*, this “official” teaching is of quite a different character to that exercised by the whole Church as pervaded by the spirit of Christ. It is not as the teaching of one who reflects and originates, but as of one who enounces



what others have originated. It is the office of the bishops to ascertain, formulate and set forth the mind of the whole Church in its present state of evolution. This they do as her officers, as the means she has devised for uttering her public belief and sentiment; and in certain conditions she wills that their decision as to her mind be accepted as ending all controversy in the matter for the time being. But, as we insisted before, the mind of the Church is not to be identified with the intellect of a class in the Church, *i.e.* of the theological schools whose understanding is logically developed by dialect, criticism and other purely mental processes. It is these schools that have excogitated the idea that the ecumenical council or the pope have simply to hear the theologians and then to decide their controversies by an oracular and supernatural pronouncement, and to impose this decision on the intellect of the conquered faction, and of the faithful at large, under pain of anathema. But that Faith in which the whole Church cannot fail is the Spirit of Christianity, the Char'ty that is spread abroad in the hearts of the faithful by the Holy Ghost; it is primarily a way, a life, a trueness of living; it is a doctrinal system, a body of conceptions and symbols and facts, only secondarily and by implication. It is primarily as a witness to this living concrete Faith that the testimony of the *Ecclesia Docens* demands our reverence; and secondarily as witness to that form of intellectual expression and embodiment which has been shaped and accepted by the Church as adequate to register and characterise her present stage of spiritual growth.

When dogmatic decrees come to be thus estimated, and to be no longer considered as oracular pronouncements in matters of the natural understanding, we shall be nearer to that synthesis of liberty and authority which Anglicanism seeks in vain. Reunited in a

sanelly interpreted Catholicism, the fragments of shattered Christendom might come together to their mutual reinvigoration, each lending to the others of its particular strength, and all taught by a dear-bought experience. It is not to the theologians, or to the officials, that we are to look for such a reform, but to the stern logic of history with its ruthless criticism of all unreality, and to the spread of knowledge that no class-conspiracy can keep back for long, save to its own more utter discomfiture. These are the destructive forces on which we can reckon; and for the constructive, we have the spirit of Christ working steadily in the souls of millions of Catholics and non-Catholics and non-Christians, and seeking itself from heart to heart across all the confessional barriers that theology has raised. The cry of the spiritually starving multitudes, robbed of the bread of life, will at last drown the chatter of idle theologians, and wake the great heart of the Church to the weightier realities of the Gospel.

The reunion of Christendom, as conceived and desired by a large class of its advocates, would be perhaps the greatest calamity that could befall religion in general, and Christianity in particular. It would mean the formation of a gigantic sect leagued against the rest of the world, excluding and condemning five-sevenths of its religious life. But with the conception of Catholicism here advocated, according to which the truth of the *Credo* is its correspondence to the spirit of the *Pater Noster*, whose fuller developments it characterises and registers in conceptions of the understanding, the relation of Christianity to other religions assumes a different aspect. Our estimate of them will be now determined less directly by the extent to which their beliefs and outward practices happen to coincide with those of the Church; and more directly by the measure in which they are animated by that

spirit of Christ which works in all men and all religions, and only in its highest development necessitates the acceptance of the Christian creed as its sole adequate embodiment. Its lower and more imperfect degrees will not necessarily imply some partial *doctrinal* coincidence with Catholic theological beliefs; for a creed is an organic rather than a quantitative unit, and its parts hang together and involve one another. Hence missionary effort will be rather moral than doctrinal; it will be directed less and less to forcing a violent agreement of the understanding, more and more to communicating a certain tone and affection—a certain Christliness of character that will at last make the acceptance of Christ a moral necessity, and not the conclusion of an argument.

The “pædagogic” functions of these religions in preparing nations for Christ, even as the Jewish Law did, will be duly recognised. For to cast the Gospel seed on an unprepared soil is to waste it; and the only fruit of controversial missionary-work among barbarous and savage peoples has often been to rob them of the religion they had, and leave them without a substitute. The categories of the Christian creed have often been utterly foreign to their minds, and unsuited as a vehicle for the expression of their spirit. In parting with their own symbolism they have simply lost hold of the spiritual altogether.

The right of these lower religions to exist side by side with the highest must therefore be accepted, and the ideal of one universal religion be to us as the thought of a land to which we ever journey, without hope of reaching it. The unity of humanity in religion, as in other things, will not be that of uniformity, but of multiform variety in unity. As there will always be rich and poor, strong and weak, high and low, wise and simple, so there will always be civilisation and

savagery in religion. This acceptance of inevitable conditions does not discourage or forbid missionary effort of a sane kind. Though a sudden gift of liberty or power may be fatal to those who are unprepared for such gifts and incapable of understanding their responsibilities, still it is right to prepare men as far as possible for these higher conditions ; and similarly as to Christianity, we may not impose it violently on those whom it would hurt at present ; we may not cast pearls before swine, or turn a full blaze on tender eyes ; but we must prepare as many as possible, in however remote a manner, to receive it. We must not begin at the wrong end, on the supposition that Christian dogma is the root, whereas it is rather the fruit, of Christian living ; this is akin to their mistake who would teach a language beginning with its most theoretical aspect, forgetting that it was formed and brought to life without any explicit thought of those laws which secretly governed its formation, and that similarly the Christian life was lived long before the realities of that eternal world, to which it is a self-adaptation, were brought to expression in the symbolism of theology ; that it presupposes Faith and a certain subconscious apprehension of those realities, but that it does not presuppose theological orthodoxy.

If then Christianity is to be in some sense *the* religion of the world, it cannot be so in the exclusive sense hitherto assumed ; but it must be so as the highest expression yet attained of the religious instinct in man, as the fullest embodiment of that spirit of Christ which is striving for utterance through all religions however uncouth and barbarous. Christianity is the universal destiny of mankind in the same way that civilisation or liberty or knowledge is its universal destiny. All men are made for the adult state ; but children and babes will never cease to constitute more than half the race.



## PART III

### THE ETHICS OF CONFORMITY

IF the purpose of the foregoing reflections were to convert theologians or officials to the views put forward, they would be the merest idlings of an unpractical dreamer. As soon should one hope to stay the heavens in their courses, as to prevent the inexorable laws of generation and corruption from working out their consequences. *Qui sordescit adhuc sordescat*—Let evils run their inevitable course ; for it is not by verbal dialect but by a practical and experimental *reductio ad absurdum* that God and Nature, or God in Nature, loves to prove his point, “to be justified in his sayings and to conquer when brought to judgment.” Diseases may sometimes be stayed in their beginnings, but after a certain point the fever must burn itself out. When it is thus only by getting worse that things will ever get better, well-intentioned efforts to clamp and buttress up a crumbling wall may argue more zeal than discretion, and perhaps they are better advised who busy themselves preparing for the inevitable crash, so as to get as little harm from it and as much good out of it as possible. To those who foresee this crash it is as good as present ; those who dispute or deny its possibility need not trouble themselves to solve an imaginary problem. Such is the spirit of these pages.

Assuming that the pretensions of ecclesiastical

officialdom to coercive oracular authority in matters of the natural understanding are doomed to the same fate as their medieval pretensions to divine authority over secular and civil affairs ; assuming, that is, that the pope will be as little able to maintain his supremacy in the world of reason, as in the world of politics, or anywhere outside the realm of Faith, we ask ourselves : Is it all over with Catholic Christianity ? and again : What place can we have, if any, within the Catholic body to-day ?

The former question has been implicitly answered already in the negative ; the latter must now engage us briefly.

There is undoubtedly a sort of "liberalising," that is incompatible with intellectual honesty and candour, and has its root in an exaggerated and erroneous view of ecclesiastical inerrancy. Holding to this latter in a narrow and insupportable sense, those whose education shows them certain facts and truths at discord with authoritative ecclesiastical utterances, are tempted to doctor one side of the equation or the other, so as to restore a semblance of harmony. The "officials," as a rule, doctor the facts into agreement with their own utterances ; the "liberals," to whom we refer, doctor the utterances and formulæ into agreement with the facts. The really honest liberal admits that the doctrine of ecclesiastical inerrancy must be restated so as to render such equivocation unnecessary. Similarly, as to Scriptural inerrancy. While the narrower idea of inspiration prevailed, "officials" denied every fact of science or history, that conflicted with the literal interpretation, as long as they decently could ; and even longer. When this was no longer possible then they reluctantly accepted the subterfuges of those liberalisers whom they had previously anathematised. When they could no longer explain the six creation-

days as so many revolutions of our globe, or rather, of the sun round our globe, they accepted the subterfuge that "day" meant "period" and so in other matters ; and thus new senses were slipped under the old words and past mistakes covered up and forgotten. But now criticism has frustrated all this equivocation. The "days" of Genesis i. undoubtedly meant for the writer a literal day of twenty-four hours ; the serpent in Eden, a veritable reptile ; the Noachian deluge, a universal deluge ; the years of Methuselah a literal millennium, etc. ; the mystic or rationalised sense of the liberalisers was as foreign to the writers as that which Plato read into the Homeric myths was to their originators. There is no honest escape from the embarrassment but in giving up the crude notion of Biblical inspiration altogether, and in finding the inspired element, not in the matter dealt with, but in the mode of dealing ; in the tendency, not in the point attained ; in the spirit of the artist, not in the rough fragmentary work itself. Just in the same way the attempt to save the crude notion of ecclesiastical inerrancy by a dishonest doctoring of formulæ must be abandoned, and a wider notion frankly adopted. Such liberalising is objectively as dishonest as the disingenuous jugglings of the officials themselves ; though misguided zeal has frequently adopted it in good faith.

The charge of dishonesty is also brought against the honest liberal Catholic, first of all, by the foes of Catholicism who naturally wish to identify the system with all that is most fatal to its claims on the consideration of good and reasonable men, and to weight it with every possible absurdity so as to render it insupportable to common-sense ; and this they effect most easily and simply by an appeal to the official rulers of the Church, *i.e.* to those whose claim to possess intellectual and temporal power in virtue of

their office the liberal Catholic disputes. These officials quite agree that the liberal Catholic has no place in the Church ; they would exclude all who do not admit their claims to the full.

Now if, as the "officials" of to-day contend, the episcopate stands outside and over the rest of the Church as a shepherd stands outside and over his flock ; if the subject-faithful are simply passive recipients of oracular teaching and of mystic sanctifications that flow from the episcopate as from their adequate and exclusive source and not from the whole Shepherd-Church and Vicar of Christ to its individual parts, through the *instrumentality* of the episcopate—if this hopelessly unhistorical view of the matter be correct, then of course the position of the liberal Catholic is simply self-contradictory—for to be a Catholic is then to admit as final an authority which he denies to be final. For him the final authority is Christ as progressively revealed in the life of the Church from first to last ; it is the *consensus fidelium*, the spirit of Christianity, as embodied in the present, past, and future multitudes of those who live the life. This however is a purely "spiritual" and not a "governmental" authority ; it acts by suasion, not by law. It is because the Church draws us, as Christ does, freely, and not as urging a right (even though it might be urged) that we freely submit ourselves to the government of those officers whom she has chosen for the orderly conduct of her life, and whom we obey in a spirit of charity, for the common good ; whom we can disobey without injustice to themselves. If these overestimate their powers, external obedience may yet be for the common good within certain limits, but not without limit. As long therefore as the liberal Catholic believes himself to be in communion with the spirit of the whole Church, he need not trouble himself about



the views of her officers for the time being, unless in some matter obedience to them would put him in a false position. Then the common good requires that he should submit to their ruling, and withdraw from external communion with the faithful. Short of such practical conflict, his position is no more disloyal than that of a conscientious English pro-Boer during the Chamberlain ascendancy. Such a man may be an ardent patriot even though not a Jingo, and even though in the excitement of a Mafeking triumph he may have his windows broken and his person mauled as if he were the veriest traitor. He is staunch to England, though not to "official" England of the time being; against the government, but not against the country; nor yet a rebel against the government. Nor is he disloyal if he work assiduously meanwhile in every prudent and legitimate way for a change of government; if privately and, so far as may be, publicly he foster and bring together the liberal sentiment of the country to effect the desired change, even though it will be said he is playing into the hands of the enemy, and though perhaps the enemy, while delighted with his efforts, will regard him as a secret foe to England.

If it be objected that such procedure may be honest under a democratic constitutional monarchy where party-government is recognised, but that it cannot be justified under an imperial Absolutism like that of the Church, one may answer that the liberal Catholic is just one who repudiates this notion of the Church, and that what would be dishonest in one who accepts it is perfectly honest for him.

Conceivably there might be a case when a man was not merely puzzled about his position as a Catholic, but had made up his mind finally that there was nothing to be said for it, and yet from indolence or

worldliness or other unworthy motives conformed himself outwardly to the Church. In such an attitude there would doubtless be some degree of dishonesty ; though when no other clear position seems to demand his adhesion and the whole thing seems to him a matter of comparative indifference, the pain and disturbance of others that would perhaps result from his defection might justify a negative sort of conformity, involving no positive avowal of beliefs that he denies. Such a position might be at least subjectively honest, if not altogether objectively so. Normally, to let oneself be called a Catholic ought to be an implicit avowal of belief ; but *de facto* it is not so,—for example, in France and in other modernised Catholic countries, where the term has a social and political as well as a religious value.

But for one who emphatically denies the Protestant and individualistic, as opposed to the Catholic and social, view of Christianity ; who regards the mystical body of Christ as the organ of the Christian spirit ; no other position than that of a Catholic is possible. His conscience forbids him either to go out, or needlessly to get himself thrust out, of the visible communion of the faithful. Many have gone out simply because they have allowed their judgment to be overpowered by those “officials” and anti-Catholics who assert that an inward whole-hearted adhesion to “officialism” is the very essence of Catholicism, and that liberal-Catholicism is dishonest. Thinking so, they were bound to go, and deserve commendation. But those who do not think so are bound to stay, and to do all that they can to further saner ideas. Had the reformers of the sixteenth century remained in the Church they might perhaps have effected a more tardy, but surely a more healthy, adjustment than was effected at Trent. At all events it is only by liberals

evading the efforts of the "officials" to drive them out, that the power of these latter can be broken. At present all the resources of authority are exploited to make such evasion impossible—Censorship, the Index, the Inquisition, secret delation and other medieval methods.

But does not such "evasion" savour of dishonesty?

It certainly would do so under a fair and liberal government that disdained tyrannical and underhand expedients. That the Church of Christ should be governed by the methods of Russian autocracy and terrorism is an abuse that must revolt the conscience of every Christian who is even moderately imbued with the spirit of Gospel-liberty; it is an abuse that deserves no respect. Persecution and evasion are correlatives; the former justifies the latter. Persecuted in one city, the liberal Catholic will flee to another; repressed in one way, he will break forth in another. When officials are willing to meet him on his own ground, with his own spiritual weapons, he will come into the open; but if they meet an argument only with a shower of stones he may prudently decline martyrdom. Slander, obloquy, censures, violence of all sorts—these are what he has to expect; he has good precedent, even the very best, for keeping to Galilee and avoiding Judea as long as he can; and indeed when those who sit in the seat of the Apostles pronounce him no true Catholic he may be pardoned if he recalls the parallel impeachment of those Apostles and their Master by those who sat in the chair of Moses; and he may think that if in spite of their censure Christ was a true son of the Law, he too may be, after all, a true son of the Church, even should he be violently forced outside her pale as a blasphemer.

But such an eventuality should not be courted

needlessly ; though it may be simply thrust on one through the importunity of official fanaticism, or again rare occasions may arise where the gods seem to demand a victim, and where some one must speak out and take the consequences. Let such a one rest content that, though separated from the body of the Church for such motives and in such a cause, he is drawn closer than ever to her soul ; and that, though severed from the visible communion of the faithful, he cannot be separated from the love of Christ or from the communion of humanity.



## APPENDIX I

### ON CHURCH GOVERNMENT

A MAN may subject himself and his private advantage to the good of a society to which he belongs either through duty or through love, according as he acknowledges or denies that the society has a right over him to exact such subjection. Sometimes love and duty together may compel him, as when a loving son would do his father's will even were he not bound in duty to do so.

That Christ as God, and as King of the Messianic Kingdom, had a right to exact a dutiful obedience from His disciples; that He transferred this right to His Church when He said: "I will give thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: Whatsoever thou shalt bind or loose on earth shall be bound or loosed in Heaven," "He that heareth you, heareth me," etc.—all this has been assumed as self-evident by "official" Catholicism from the earliest times. Yet it is an assumption that needs criticism; and the following points must be noticed.

(1) It was characteristic of Christ that He laid aside His rights: "You call me Lord and Master, you say well; if I your Lord and Master wash your feet," etc., and "Lo, I am in the midst of you as one that serveth." And St Paul says of Him: "Though he was in the form of God he thought it not a thing to be snatched-at to equal himself with God, but took on

himself the form of a servant." Again "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve." "The rulers of nations," Christ tells His disciples, "lord it over them; but be ye not so. He that is greatest among you, let him be as the least." "Do not desire to be called Rabbi." St Peter warns bishops and elders that they should not lord it over the elect but should lead them by example (1 Pet. v. 3). And if St Paul (Acts xx. 28) is quoted for "*Spiritus Sanctus posuit episcopos regere* (*ποιμαίνειν*) *gregem*," the context shows that it is a pastoral regimen that is meant, the rule of the spiritual shepherd who *goes before* his sheep by alluring example as Christ did, not of one who drives them unwilling to the shambles (*cf.* Ps. xxii. *Dominus regit me ποιμαίνει* = The Lord is my shepherd, or, shepherds me).

(2) From all this it would seem that Christ waived His right to demand obedience from the unwilling; that He trusted to spiritual, and not to juridical, authority; to His power over the hearts of men: "*Si quis vult*—if any man chooses to come after me, let him take up his cross and follow me." Jurisdiction implies a certain power of at least *moral* compulsion; it binds a man under pain of injustice or injury to another—to the social organism of which he is part—and not only to himself. If, to some, Christ said absolutely: "Follow me," it was surely not as claiming jurisdiction but as possessing a spell over the soul.

(3) When St Paul sought a remedy for the disorders of the Corinthian church it was not in jurisdiction, but in that self-repressing, self-devoting charity (1 Cor. xiii.) which renders obedience and looks to the common good out of love and not as of justice: "Owe no man anything; but love one another." It is not enough to show that he recognised a certain kind of hierarchy of officers, and the need of obedience,

unless we can show that this was to be an *ex justitia* and not merely an *ex caritate* obedience.

(4) There seems no clear recognition of a juridical, as opposed to a spiritual and pastoral, hierarchy, in the New Testament, or till we come to the sub-apostolic fathers of the Church. This is less strange if we allow (a) for the expectation of an immediate Parousia; (b) for the fervour of the first disciples and the conception of the Church as constituted exclusively of Saints. Jurisdiction contemplates the possibility of revolt and of egoistic self-assertion. Where charity prevails universally and effectually, order and hierarchy may still be required for corporate life, but not jurisdiction. Judgment and discretion may fail, but not goodwill; confusion may arise, but not rebellion.

(5) Christ's Kingdom was not of this world but a Kingdom of Truth—a spiritual Kingdom. Hence His servants were not to fight, nor to take the sword; nor would He call on the angels to defend Him by force. Jurisdiction is not directly physical force, but it is moral force or coercion directed against the recalcitrant will—the right of the whole against the part. It is the chief weapon of the kingdoms of this world. By it the Church is put into the category of *governments*, side by side with the State, with which she thus divides the territory of human action, just as theology divides the territory of the human understanding with science and history. In both cases encroachment and conflict are possible, and the divine power must claim a supremacy over the natural which really amounts to a complete subordination of the latter to the former. Is there then a parallel fallacy? We have seen how theology oversteps its rights. Must we say the same of Canon Law?

(6) As Christ is supposed to have revealed a

theological system to supplant that of the Jews, so He is supposed to have supplanted the Law of Moses by another code. The Kingdom of Heaven was to be taken out of the hands of the Levitical priesthood and transferred to Peter and his successors, who were to sit on the Chair of Christ, just as the Scribes and Pharisees sat in the seat of Moses; they were to declare the law of Christ and to enforce it by jurisdiction derived from His regal office. It was the substitution of a world-wide for a national theocracy; of a more inward and spiritual for a less spiritual dispensation. True, the Mosaic law was, at once, Church-law and State-law, and there could be no conflict; whereas the Catholic Church leaves certain departments of human action to the direct jurisdiction of the several States in which she holds sway. But so far as these States are Christian she claims the same indirect influence in secular government that she claims for her theology in matters of science. The ideal of Canon Law is a universal theocracy.

(7) Of this ideal there is no *certain* hint in the Gospel. Christ's opposition to the lawyers was not that of a rival lawyer or of a new Moses. He came to fulfil the law, not by supplementing it, but by abolishing it and substituting the Spirit and Grace and Charity. When He says: "Whosoever shall break the least of these commandments," etc., He means what St Paul meant; *i.e.* that those who are filled with the spirit of love toward God and man will spontaneously keep the law and far more; that they will possess the law-giving principle within themselves and will need no juridical coercion. In this sense it is that in the Sermon on the Mount He seems to add new commandments to those of Moses; it is not that He multiplies precepts, bringing the thoughts and feelings, no less than the words and actions of men under



ecclesiastical jurisdiction ; but that He recognises the futility and superficiality of all merely legal righteousness. Without the spirit of love it avails nothing before God to abstain from murder, but if the spirit be there it will restrain the heart no less than the hand.

(8) If the Kingdom of Heaven be thus sharply opposed to the kingdoms of earth, as being governed by spiritual forces and not by law and jurisdiction, the keys of that kingdom and the power of binding and loosing must be understood of a metaphorical and spiritual jurisdiction—of such a power over souls as Christ exercised on earth, and which He imparts to His Church in so far as the Church is the creation of His own spirit. That power was pastoral and not regal (*ποιμαίνειν* not *regere*) ; it was the power of “ the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God ” (Eph. vi. 17). He drew men after Him—and did not drive them before Him—by the power of His grace and truth, not by the power of an officer. The Key of the Kingdom is simply Christ’s own secret of converting souls to God. To bind and loose are not two contrary acts, as though Christ sometimes loosed men from their sins, at other times bound them, or left them bound, to their sins ; nor has He bequeathed to His Church a power of spiritual death which could belong to the devil alone. It is one and the same act, viewed differently, that looses the soul from the devil and binds it to God. If ever the priest cannot absolve, it is only because he cannot convert the soul to God ; it is not through an exercise of power but through a limitation of power. If what the Church binds on earth is bound in heaven, it is not as though Heaven took the risk and responsibility of the official acts of its fallible delegate, and were prepared to stand by his occasional blunders ; it is not as though, by a legal

fiction needful in civil government, such blunders were to be accounted the acts of Heaven itself. It is rather because the spirit of Christ dwelling in His Church will never bind or loose otherwise than Christ Himself would do. The words do not *assimilate*, but *contrast*, spiritual with juridical binding and loosing ; the latter may be valid on earth but invalid in Heaven. And this is the true force of the words, "He that heareth you, heareth me"—words so often applied to merely official and juridical authority, whether ecclesiastical or secular, but directed to those who, by a special charisma, were so inspired with Christ's Spirit that they shared His spiritual power over the hearts of men.

(9) In fine there is no convincing evidence in the Gospels for the idea that Christ exercised and conferred upon his Church a juridical power over souls, and engaged to ratify any *bonâ-fide* blunders the Church might make in the exercise of such power. But such an engagement is connoted by the very conception of juridical power.

(10) All this means that the New Testament does not contemplate explicitly the transformation of "charismatic" into "institutional" Christianity, and that it is only in a secondary and applied sense that utterances referring to the former can be referred to the latter. Given the necessity and legitimacy of that transformation, as required by the very nature of things, and as being therefore indirectly of divine origin ; given that amorphous Christendom was bound to develop an officialdom within itself as a condition of its life and of its more abundant life, what is the nature of ecclesiastical official authority ?

(11) When through the dilution and evanescence of inspiration the Church ceased to be a society of Saints with whom love superseded duty ; when it became a

net containing all manner of fishes, good, bad and indifferent, some kind of government was indispensable as in every human society. Love needed to be reinforced by law; personal and spiritual authority by official. That is the justification of Catholicism, and the condemnation of Protestantism, which strives vainly to perpetuate the "charismatic" dispensation.

The members of even the most voluntary and spontaneous society are bound by natural justice to obey its laws or to withdraw from its communion; and this duty is correlative to a right of jurisdiction on the part of the officers of the society. A ship passenger is on board by his own, not by the captain's will. While so on board he is bound in justice to obey orders. In port he has the alternative of stepping ashore; at sea he owes it to himself only, and not to the captain, to remain on board. The Christian is bound to the Church *ex caritate*, and as a condition of his spiritual life; but not *ex justitia*; for the Church, like Christ, draws, but does not coerce, men into communion with herself. But as long as charity binds him to the Church, duty and justice bind him to obey her officials in what belongs to their office, even should charity fail as a motive in particular instances. Fundamentally the authority of her officials is spiritual, though proximately juridical. That of the State or of parents is fundamentally natural; it is founded in the conditions of natural, not of spiritual, life.

(12) The direct heir of Christ's spirit is the whole multitude of the faithful. That spirit expresses and embodies itself in thought and language, and also in conduct and action. As there is an official and an unofficial doctorate, so there is an official and an unofficial pastorate. Apart from all ecclesiastical government and hierarchy, the spirit of Christ works itself out in Christian conduct just as it does in Christian

belief and doctrine, *i.e.* by the law of variation, criticism, selection and appropriation, through which the ideal of the Christian life is gradually evolved. If there is an informal, unofficial *Ecclesia Docens*, so also an unofficial *Ecclesia Ducens* or *Pascens* by which the Church is far more really and vitally governed than by the official pastorate. There are those who in sanctity go before the rest of the flock, shepherd-wise, and draw others after them by example and by force of personal grace and goodness; who introduce new habits, customs, standards, adaptations, which are informally criticised by the *sensus fidelium* and (if felt to be true developments of the Christian life) appropriated. As in doctrinal, so in practical matters, the official *Ecclesia* expedites this process and communises its results. There is no such thing as official sanctity or official wisdom; but order and the common good require that where there is doubt as to the *sensus fidelium* the declaration of officials should be accepted. So far then as officials control the conduct of the faithful it is as representing the spirit of Christ diffused through the Church, and solely in matters of the spirit.

(13) The power of the unofficial Church over souls is purely pastoral and spiritual like that of her Founder. She can only say: "If any man *will* come after me," etc.; she can only draw him by word and example; can only compel him by the sword of the spirit. The power of her officers is only indirectly divine in origin, in so far, namely, as it is the creation and natural development of the Church, who is herself the creation of the spirit of Christ. It is of *divine right* only in the sense that the authority of any free society is of *divine right*, *i.e.*, it is demanded by common justice, which is the will of God. The duty of obedience to it, and even to purely civil or domestic authority, was



naturally enforced, in days of loose exegesis, by such texts as "He that heareth you heareth me," and, "Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven"; and gradually the conception gained ground that the pope as Christ's Vicar could exercise supreme juridical and official power over the whole territory of human conduct, directly in things spiritual, indirectly in things temporal; being thus brought into conflict with the "rulers of the nations."

(14) The fact that Church-officials, like those of any other society, exercise a lawful jurisdiction over certain departments of human conduct, makes a conflict with civil authority a possibility now and then; *e.g.*, in questions of marriage and divorce. In the view of those who regard the pope as possessing a higher jurisdiction *of the same kind* as that of the State, this would be a conflict of similar powers. But if the pope's jurisdiction is simply subordinate to the Church's purely spiritual authority—to her pastoral and prophetic power; to the sword of the spirit which is God's word; to the kingdom and supremacy of truth and righteousness—then the conflict is ultimately between powers of a different order, spiritual and juridical; and the pope has no more juridical power over princes than Christ had over Caiaphas or Pilate, when He stood bound before them as a witness of the Truth. "The meek shall inherit the earth;" by yielding and suffering, not by fighting, must the Church conquer, as in the beginning so always. When she took the sword she perished by the sword. The Church's power is personal and not official; it is her power of proclaiming the truth by which men must judge themselves.

(15) If these things be so, we must, in criticising existing Church-law, distinguish what is due to the misapprehension of the nature of ecclesiastical juris-

diction from what is consistent with a right apprehension thereof. If it is the function of officials merely to gather up, systematise and proclaim those rules and practices of Christian life that have been elaborated by the spiritual activity of the faithful at large (*cf.* 12), then we may reject as false and invalid all *a priori* legislation of lawyers and casuists who pretend to lead the Church instead of following her lead, who push the cart faster than the horse can go—all that has not been created by the proved exigencies of the spiritual life of the faithful; that has not come from below upwards, but has been forced from above downwards. Here again the doctrinal and practical life of the Church are parallel as joint-embodiments of the spirit of Christ diffused through the whole *corpus fidelium*. If the pope and episcopate are the root of that life, if the faithful are merely receptive of the sap that flows first through the root, then of course the development and expansion of the spirit of Christ, both doctrinal and practical, must originate with the pope and pass down to the faithful. But it is patent to all eyes that things do not happen this way; that it is the “officials” who are more properly receptive. Besides the whole history of the development of this officialdom is in flagrant contradiction to such pretensions.

## APPENDIX II

### ON THE DISCERNMENT OF DOCTRINE

(1) IF the views here advocated be true it will be necessary to criticise the official teaching of the Church (as summed up in Denziger’s *Encheiridion*), and to discern those elements, which derive from pure theo-

logical industry or other sources, from those which have been dictated purely by the exigencies of the Christian life as lived by the Saints. Besides those which are simply imposed by theology, there are many that originate with the faithful, not in consequence of their faith but of their spiritual poverty, beliefs of an essentially decadent tendency, superstitions, evasions. And there are others that have been fostered by clerical corruption, avarice or ambition. All these crumble away at once, as either idle or pernicious, before the criterion of the spirit of Christ. If they are not exigencies of Christian Sanctity ; if they are not simply its embodiment in terms of the imagination and the understanding, they are nothing ; they are not the utterances of the Spirit of Holiness.

(2) Life and life-theory, sentiment and idea, are the alternating links of the chain of spiritual experience ; but life leads, and theory follows, and then fuller life and wider theory. The Church's life precedes and dictates her doctrine step by step. The notion that her official teachers first elaborate the theory by some sort of mental labour—albeit inspired—and that then the faithful try to understand it and to live up to it, is utterly mechanical and untrue to fact. Yet this is implied by the place which theologians assume to-day in regard to the Church's doctrinal life. Theology is not the product of the spiritual life of the faithful, but of the intellectual life of the Schools ; and yet theology confirmed by papal oracle is imposed as the *sensus fidelium*. Doubtless it embodies this to some extent, but it embodies far more that is merely the *sensus theologorum*. This *a priori* elaboration of doctrine, dictated by theological interest and not by the exigencies of the Christian life, leads to such a *bouleversement* as results from pushing the cart three times as fast as a horse can go. It is a fallacy kin to that of

voluminous *a priori* legislation which forgets that Society, like Nature, can be led only so far as it is understood and followed.

(3) What is natural is universal—"Semper, ubique, ab omnibus"; and what is so universal is true to Nature and is founded in unchanging reality. In this universal sense, the good and the true are convertible; they are "the natural" under its practical and speculative aspects. Life, which means self-adaptation to reality, depends upon Truth. Christ is the Way and the Life, because He is the truth. Doctrines which embody the Way and the Life of Christ and His Saints in terms of the imagination and the understanding derive their regulative or practical truth from their ontological truth—from their analogous correspondence to the realities of the Spiritual Order. Such is the truth of those doctrines which the universal experience of true Christians has found to be characteristic and regulative of the spirit of Christ—*e.g.*, the conception of the Absolute as Spirit and Person; as One and yet as Social; as Creator and Providence; as Father of all men; as incarnate in Christ; the conception of the God-man as virgin-born, as sacrificed, as risen and ascended; as present mystically, sacramentally, and by His spirit, in the multitude of His followers; the conception of the communion of Saints; of resurrection and immortality; of Judgment, Heaven and Hell and Purgatory—all these and others have been experimentally approved by the Church as true to the Christian Spirit, as characterising and developing its expression in sentiment and conduct; as revealing its subconscious implications so far as they can be formulated in terms of the human imagination and understanding. Other beliefs there are and other aspects (gross and materialistic) of these beliefs for which no such sanction can be alleged. They may be



false, and in that case their seeming utility and convenience will not save them from eventually proving themselves mischievous. They may be true; but it is merely as history or science or philosophy, not with that religious truth which is the object of faith.

(4) Against all this a grave objection arises: Does not the *Orbis terrarum*, the whole Catholic world, accept the "official" theory of doctrinal authority, according to which the pope decides theological controversies by oracle and imposes this decision on the untheological multitudes, who scarcely know or care what the dispute is about, or whose interest in it is intellectual or factional rather than practical and spiritual? And does it not accept this view as conducive to ecclesiastical peace and unity and therefore indirectly to Christian Life?

I do not attempt to decide, though everything hangs on the decision; I only ask in turn: How far has this view been elaborated in the Schools under the influence of other than spiritual interests, and imposed judicially upon the faithful from above; and how far has it been elaborated among the faithful themselves under the exigencies of spiritual life, and simply formulated by authorities? Again: How far has it been elaborated under the conviction that faith and theological orthodoxy are identical; or under a misunderstanding of their respective relations, or of the precise truth-value of the articles of belief? Once more: How far would the denial of this (or of similarly questionable *placets* of theology) injure or impoverish the religious life of those Catholics who aim at the most perfect Christliness of spirit—supposing, of course, that they could deny with a good conscience?

With these questions I leave the matter.

(5) Officialdom is a life-need of the Church—we need an official as well as an unofficial, a formal as

well as an informal, *Ecclesia Docens*, and *Ecclesia Ducens*. Here Catholicism is invincible against Protestantism. But not till we can secure sages for our princes shall we be able to secure saints for our priests, though princes and priests we must have in some form or other, even at the cost of such legal fictions as official wisdom and sanctity with all their disadvantages. It is in a clear recognition of the nature and purpose of such fictions that the remedy for those disadvantages is to be sought, as it is from a certain literalism in the understanding of them that those disadvantages spring. The too literal acceptance of the metaphor which calls the Church a kingdom has led insensibly to the debasing of the heavenly reality to the level of its earthly symbol. On Christ's lips a kingdom meant such conception of government as would be intolerable in these days when, thanks to Christianity, the conceptions of liberty, justice, personality and society have been so greatly enlarged and purified. It is a literalising of His metaphor that has allowed the officialdom of the Church to be viewed, not merely as vested with the same kind of jurisdiction as secular judgments, but as an absolute theocratic monarchy of a type that our civilisation has outgrown. If the priest (*i.e.* the pope and the hierarchy) is the Vicar of Christ, it is only because he is the official Vicar of the Church. She alone is the true, and not merely the official, Vicar of Christ, because, in her collectivity, she is filled with His spirit, and His life is prolonged in hers. The priest is Christ by a useful fiction; she is the mystical Christ in deed and in truth.

## APPENDIX III

## PROPHETIC AND SCRIPTURAL INSPIRATION

THE unproved assumption underlying the argument of these pages is that our view of scriptural infallibility, our conception of the value of inspiration and prophecy, is subject to development ; and that therefore our conception of ecclesiastical infallibility must be subject to a similar and dependent development. It is assumed that the proposition which says : " God is the Author of Scripture," cannot mean for any of us to-day what it meant for St Augustine, what it meant for those earlier councils whose mind has been incorporated without criticism or conscious mitigation in the later and latest Councils, and in the Encyclical *Providentissimus* of Leo XIII. Without proving this assumption, it may be well to indicate briefly how it modifies our conception of the divine authorship of Scripture.

(1) In Christ we, as Christians, recognise the fullest expression and purest creation of that Holy and Divine Spirit, which we may therefore characterise as the spirit of Christ. We recognise that same Spirit as finding less perfect expression in the prophets and saints of the old dispensation, and in the writers of the Hebrew Scriptures, so far as these were not mere copyists and recorders, but idealised their themes or were fired with the idealism they found there already.

(2) As any writing or work of art may be inspired and guided by a certain ideal, end, purpose or principle, so the Scriptures are inspired in varying degrees by the spirit of Christ, by some at least rudimentary sense of Christianity. Under some such influence the inspired writer gathers together, selects, modifies and

refines in a Christian sense such beliefs, legendary or historical, as he finds to hand in the popular tradition of his time and race.

(3) In this result we must distinguish the inspired modification or refinement from the matter refined and modified; the tendency from the actual attainment; just as we discern the artistic genius that betrays itself in the rudest sketch of a great Master and is lacking to the finished production of an Andrea del Sarto.

(4) Thus the modifications of the Babylonian cosmogony and of the Canaanitish Sagas in the book of Genesis are plainly inspired by the spirit of Christ in so far as they are effected in the interests of that ethical monotheism of which Christianity is only the fullest expression.

(5) It is probably a fallacy to look for a steady unbroken development of the Spirit of Christianity from its first germination up to its perfect fructification in Christ. Rough weather may thwart the spring many a time before the earth puts on her green. Yet each essay is towards the same end and from the same vital principle. As a whole, for all its inequalities, the Old Testament is Christianity in the making; it is the creation of the spirit of Christ, the collected rough drafts of the finished work.

(6) As to the value of the distinctly prophetic Scriptures and the lawfulness of giving them a more universal and prescient sense than was present to the mind of the prophet, and of viewing this sense as also inspired, there are two conceptions, according to the way in which we regard God as the "Divine Author" of these utterances.

(7) That the Holy Ghost "dictated" such Scriptures is plainly a metaphor. No serious man supposes that the picture of a dove whispering at the prophet's ear



is to be taken for history. Yet the "verbalism" of St Augustine and other patristic interpreters implies a perfectly equivalent conception of the matter.

(8) Of the two tenable conceptions of the divine causality in prophetic inspiration, one may be called the *miraculous*; the other, the *non-miraculous*—not the natural, for both are supernatural.

(9) The *miraculous* conception of the matter implies that God, by some sort of self-limitation, leaves His position as first and ultimate cause and takes the place of some finite and secondary cause, whose intervention is dispensed with for the occasion. That, I take it, is the theological definition of a *strict* miracle.

(10) The utterances of oracles and soothsayers are supposed to derive from the mind and will of some spirit distinct from that of the soothsayer, who is possessed or inspired by that spirit, and whose tongue or imagination is made its passive instrument for the time being, and is withdrawn from the normal control of the soothsayer's own mind and will.

(11) If the spirit in question be God, then we have the First Cause playing the part of the secondary cause, namely, of the mind and will of the soothsayer; and the inspiration is strictly miraculous—which, I suppose, diabolic or angelic possession would not be.

(12) That this is the notion of inspiration current in the earlier stages of religious development there can be no doubt. Even when the higher sort of prophecy supervenes, it is viewed as an "enthusiasm" or divine possession of the same miraculous type as that by which the "seer" recovers lost property; in other words, it is considered a case of so-called "double personality." Not only among the Jews, but also in the early Christian Church, Isaiah and Jeremiah were viewed as clairvoyant in the same sense as the Pythian oracle or the Sybil—the difference lying in the source

or principle of their inspiration and in the matter of their prediction—the former being the Holy Ghost; the latter, the Kingdom of God and His Christ.

(13) It is apparently as to miraculous predictions and soothsayings that Christian apologists have, up to the present, appealed to the Old Testament prophecies; and it is as a species of miracle, *i.e.* a miraculous prediction, that prophecy is appealed to by the Vatican Council as a confirmation of the claims of Christianity.

(14) If God is the author of prophecy in the miraculous sense; if He speaks “by the mouth” of the prophets, not “providentially,” as First Cause, but “interventionally,” as substituting Himself in place of a secondary cause (*i.e.* of the prophet’s own mind and will); then, as I think theologians allow, it is not needful that the prophet should even know what he is saying or doing; nor need we trouble to think what the words meant for him, but only what God intended them to convey to their immediate hearers and to mankind at large.

(15) According to St Augustine, as God foresaw every true spiritual meaning that the words might bear or, at least, would in fact be made to bear in His Church, He intended to convey all that truth by them—for, except as to evil and falsehood, we cannot allow indirectness in the Divine will. Thus we must say: “God made the stars to shine upon the earth”—for, foreseeing that they would do so, He intended it *directly*, and not merely as a by-result.

I see no clear way out of this view of St Augustine’s, which was also that of St Thomas, and which dominated the West for centuries. I suspect it was that of St Paul and the other New Testament writers, whose use of Old Testament Scripture seems to suppose that “multiple-sense.” I know it has become obsolete, but I do not see why it should, so long as we are

bound to hold the miraculous view of inspiration—which is that of the Councils, the Fathers, the Apostles.

(16) It may be, however, that the doctrine of Inspiration admits of development, and that the Vatican distinction between miracle and prophecy is more adequate and exclusive than I have implied; that they are there distinguished, to show that prophecy is *not* miracle or miraculous.

What then is to be said as to the second or *non-miraculous* conception of Divine Causality in relation to the Authorship of the prophetic Scriptures?

(17) According to this conception, the First Cause which works in every operation of man's mind and will is said to do so supernaturally when its working is directed to a supernatural end, one that is realised outside and beyond the Order of Nature, and to which that order is but subservient and instrumental, *i.e. eternal life*, for the end always specifies and qualifies inherently the movement which is directed to that end. Though supernatural, this movement is not miraculous. It may even be called natural, because the supernatural includes, but does not set aside the natural; it is not *praeter-natural* or counter-natural. In this view Divine Inspiration does not transgress or suspend any law of psychology; it is an extraordinary event like the appearance of a comet, but is as little miraculous.

(18) In one sense therefore God, in this view, is the author of prophecy only in the same way that He is the author of everything that any man says or writes. That is to say, He keeps His place as First Cause,<sup>1</sup> and does not take the place of some secondary cause; there are not *two* minds and *two* wills at work, as it

<sup>1</sup> For clearness I keep to this theological term, always understanding that Cause is said of the Absolute only analogically.

were agencies of the same finite order, one of which overcomes the other, either setting it aside or using it as a tool. It is only in the secondary cause, in man, that the unnamable, unimaginable influence of the First Cause takes the form of *mind* and *will*; being in itself something that is prior to all mind and will, infinitely greater, infinitely different; not to be thought of as a spirit ruling over spirit, as a man rules over men. Hence, that God is the Author of our thoughts does not mean that He has thought them; nor has He willed what we will; or said what we have said; or done what we have done.

(19) But God is also the Author of Prophecy in a quite special sense.

Religious inspiration has it in common with poetic and artistic inspiration that its results seem to be creative and out of proportion to the assignable resources of the agent, who cannot himself understand or explain the subconscious origin of what seems to be "given" to him as it were from without, and is in no sense the result of conscious effort or calculation.

In their rules for discerning Spirits, ascetics and mystics bid us carefully distinguish what is thus *given* to us, from what we add to it by our own conscious after-reflection. In respect to the first we seem passive—as it were, possessed by a spirit not our own. Yet the phenomenon is precisely parallel to those of poetic or artistic inspiration, which also in simpler times have been ascribed to divine possession, but which are now recognised as indeed rare but perfectly natural occurrences.

Without ascribing religious inspiration to miraculous possession we may regard its results (like those of poetic inspiration) as "given" from God in a way that results of reflex effort are not given.

(20) But as being directed to eternal life the inspira-



tions of man's religious sense are, in the present order, *supernatural*, which cannot be said of poetic or artistic inspirations. They derive from God viewed as the Author of the Supernatural order.

So far therefore as the prophetic Scriptures are the work of religious inspiration in any degree, God is their author in a way in which He is not the author of all man's works, nor even of all man's *inspired* works.

(21) The higher sort of prophecy is necessarily and naturally clairvoyant and predictive, and is thus easily classed with soothsaying and professedly miraculous divination by the gross-minded and unspiritual.<sup>1</sup>

(22) The "inferential sense" of a man of high sensibility in spiritual matters, who lives in keen and wide sympathy with his times, whose mind is as a brilliant of innumerable facets that catches rays of light from every quarter, whose pulse answers to every vibration of public sentiment, will, under inspiration, leap to conclusions, as to things distant in time and space, that will seem miraculous to those who stand on a lower plane and command a narrower outlook.

(23) It is by men of this kind, in their moments of inspiration, that the wisdom, which lies scattered piecemeal through the collective mind of a whole people, is suddenly fused together and transformed into some epoch-marking discovery analogous to those of a Newton in the physical order.

(24) Universality is the characteristic of all such discoveries; validity for everywhere and always; hence they afford a basis of prediction as to the future, and of clairvoyance as to the absent. As gravitation avails to the bounds of the universe, so also to the end of time (ex. hyp.).

(25) Now the Kingdom of Heaven has its laws

<sup>1</sup> For the amalgamation of the functions of "seer" and "prophet," cf. C. Montefiore's "Hibbert Lectures" (1892), Lect. II.

like the Kingdom of Nature; laws that control the relation of God with man in all that concerns the life of the spirit. And those laws are discovered gradually, through progressive revelation of the sort we are speaking of. First the less universal, and then the more universal, laws are revealed, and thus the Kingdom of Grace grows from chaos to cosmos in the human understanding.

(26) The conception (a) of God, (b) of the Just Man, (c) of the Just Nation, or Kingdom of God, or Church—these are the three objects of prophecy and of religious inspiration.

Hence every prophetic idealisation of the “Just Man” is typical of the Most Just, who is Christ. The ideal Just Man of Ps. xxi. or of Isaiah xliii. or of Wisdom iii. is not represented as suffering somewhat after the manner of Christ, because the prophet miraculously foresaw and intentionally foreshadowed Christ as suffering, but because it is a universal law of the spiritual world that every just man must suffer such things at the hand of sinners; hence the Most Just, after whom the prophets and idealists have always sighed, was bound to suffer most of all in the same way.

(27) Similarly the real Just Men of the Old Testament history, such as Joseph or Jeremiah, were necessarily and not miraculously “typical” of Christ in many points so far as they were like Him in Justice, and were placed in a worldly environment in some degree like His. The failures of perfect correspondence between type and antitype are quite explicable in this view, but quite inexplicable in the other.

(28) Also the earlier and narrower conceptions or ideals of the Kingdom or People of God were typical and prophetic of the wider and more universal (*cf.* Newman’s essay on Anti-Christ).

(29) According to this non-miraculous conception of inspiration it is not possible to speak of a double sense of Scripture, *i.e.* of what God intended and what the prophet intended as of two distinct things; for there is only one mind, will, and intention to consider, and that is the prophet's.

(30) But in the first place: the words of such prophecies can never give more than a hint of the full sense. They are necessarily symbolic, metaphoric, poetical; for the poverty of ordinary language is unequal to the richness of new and creative ideas of this kind. It is as though a musician should strive to express on a shepherd's reed a conception that would tax the powers of an orchestra. Hence, we should look to the spirit of the utterance rather than to the letter.

(31) Secondly, the objective value and potentiality of a universal conception is vaster than any mind can compass. Hence, though the further developments of his thought were not distinctly intended by the prophet, yet they were implicitly intended, and constitute the "spiritual sense" of the utterance. The earlier prophets (or perhaps we should say the lesser or lower—for it is not a question of date but of quality) did not foresee or explicitly intend the later and higher conceptions of the ideal Just Man and Just People; yet these later conceptions explain what they were groping after in the depths of their subconsciousness, and may therefore be viewed as the spiritual and implicit as opposed to the natural and explicit sense of their words.

\* \* \* \* \*

Such then is the modification which I assume that our conception of the divine Authorship and infallibility of Scripture must undergo; and which entails, by inexorable logic, a corresponding modification of

our idea of the divine authority and infallibility of Fathers, Councils and Popes. In both cases the development is an advance to something higher, truer, more spiritual—a gain, not a loss. The letter killeth, the flesh profiteth nothing, the Spirit quickeneth.

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## EPILOGUE

[As has been said, the “liberalism” of this restatement of Catholicism lies not in an attempt to reconcile the data of science and history with dogmas by giving to these latter a sense which their framers would have repudiated, but in a frank abandonment of the “official” in favour of a broader theory of ecclesiastical inerrancy; in a wider conception of the nature of dogmatic truth; in a modification of our view of the Church’s claim to infallibility parallel to, and dependent on, that which we are forced to adopt in regard to the Sacred Scriptures. As to the heterodoxy of these views from the “official” standpoint, there can be no manner of question. But those who challenge them—“officials” or others—ought not to cavil over this point or that which may be easily disputed on their own presuppositions, but should rather strive to show that the “official” or some other view takes account of, and solves, the *whole body* of difficulties, here dealt with, in a more satisfactory manner.] A comprehensive view of any complex situation will necessarily have its weak points, and will always be somewhat of a compromise.



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